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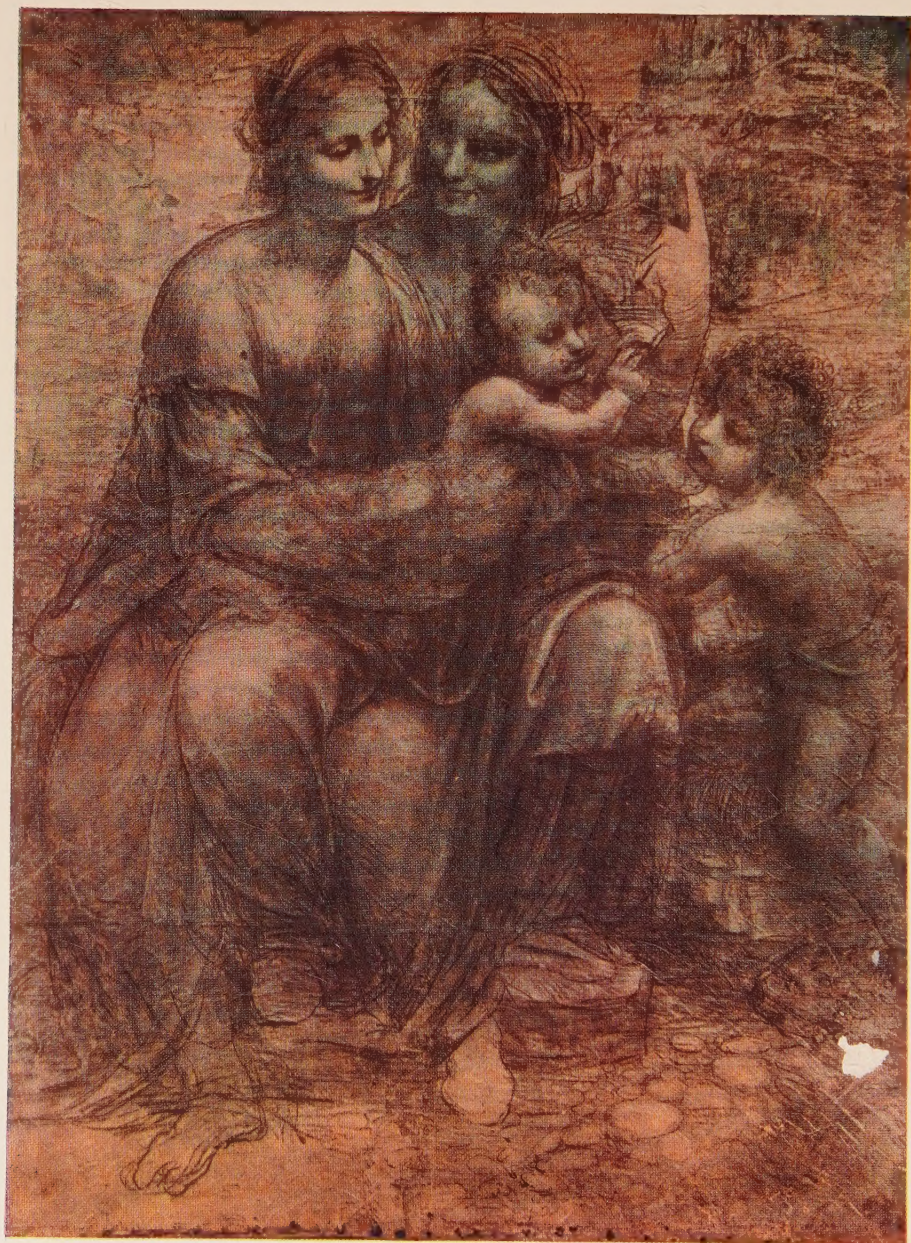
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AN OUTLINE HISTORY OF PAINTING



LEONARDO DA VINCI
The Virgin, Child and St. Anne
(*Florentine*)

AN OUTLINE
HISTORY *of* PAINTING

IN EUROPE TO THE END OF THE
NINETEENTH CENTURY

WITH 149 ILLUSTRATIONS OF
WHICH 24 ARE IN COLOUR

by

S. C. KAINES SMITH

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>Assisi</i>	Upper Church of S. Francis, Assisi
<i>Berlin</i>	Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin
<i>Dresden</i>	Royal Gallery, Dresden
<i>Edinburgh</i>	National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh
<i>Florence : Acc.</i>	Accademia, Florence
<i>Glasgow</i>	Corporation Gallery, Glasgow
<i>Hermitage</i>	Hermitage Galleries, Petrograd
<i>Liechtenstein</i>	Prince Liechtenstein's Collection, Vienna
<i>Louvre</i>	Louvre, Paris
<i>Metropolitan</i>	Metropolitan Museum, New York
<i>Munich</i>	Alte Pinacothek, Munich
<i>N.G.</i>	National Gallery, London
<i>N.P.G.</i>	National Portrait Gallery, London
<i>Prado</i>	The Prado, Madrid
<i>Rijks</i>	Rijks Museum, Amsterdam
<i>Tate</i>	National Gallery of British Art, London
<i>Uffizi</i>	Uffizi Gallery, Florence
<i>Venice : Acc.</i>	Accademia, Venice
<i>Vienna</i>	Imperial Gallery, Vienna
<i>Wallace</i>	Wallace Collection, London

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INTRODUCTION

FROM the very dawn of history, and indeed long before history was thought of, men tried to set down in lines and colours some kind of representation of the things that interested them: and much of the unwritten history of mankind has been built up in our own days from the study of these attempts at representation, for they are our only evidence of what interested human beings in days long gone by.

The cave-men, who first made stones and bones and antlers of deer into weapons and tools, drew pictures of the beasts they hunted on the walls of the caverns that were their dwellings, and many of these have been found in France and Spain, going back to an immense antiquity, perhaps as much as 10,000 years B.C., when the Polar ice came much further south than it does now, and when bears and reindeer and mammoth roamed over Southern Europe. The ancient peoples of a far later time, in Chaldea, in Egypt, and in Greece long before the history of Greece began, have left paintings upon pottery, that show how they, like ourselves, saw the beauty of flowers and animals. We can tell from such paintings that it is many thousands of years since the dwellers beside the Nile invented ships: we can see from the paintings in Egyptian tombs how the Egyptians hunted wild-fowl, and what were the animals that they had tamed to their use; the enemies they fought and the people from overseas with whom they traded. We can see, painted on the walls of the great palaces of pre-historic Crete, the ritual of a forgotten religion, with the bull and the snake as its sacred symbols; their sports, their costumes, the dresses the women wore and the way they did their hair. What little we know of classical Greek painting tells us that they had a keen feeling for dramatic incident, and a wonderful sense of the beauty of the human form, but that they were content with few and simple colours, because the brilliant sunshine of their climate made light and shadow more noticeable than colour, so that sculpture was a more natural art to them than painting.

Rome followed Greece closely in all the arts; and with

the gradual decline of the Roman Empire, and the steady opposition of the Christian religion in Constantinople to the making of all images, the study of forms fell into disuse, and the painter was forced to reduce his figures to mere dummies, lacking life and reality : but he made up for it in richness of colour and elaboration of ornament, and wealth of gilding and of precious stones encrusted upon his work. It was only in the west of Europe that some of the old lively interest of the painter in the things he drew survived, and the illumination of books with miniatures (which means literally the enrichment of the lettered page with *red*—minium) was the most vigorous and interesting form of painting in the Dark Ages from the 7th to the 10th century A.D. Painting on a larger scale was deliberately stiff and formal, and each generation copied the “ pictures ” of the one before it, till almost all recognizable shape was lost, and the pictures were scarcely more than symbols, distinguishable only by their familiarity, as *meaning* rather than representing persons and incidents and ideas of religion.

The history of painting, then, is really the history, not only of painters and their work, but of how it came about that men learned to paint at all.

In these days, we can go to an art-school, and learn drawing and painting. We can learn the rules of perspective and light and shade, and how to mix our colours so as to make any tint that is wanted ; we can draw from the living model, and from ancient sculpture, both in colour and in black and white ; the paper and the canvas, the paints and the brushes and the pencils that we use are all prepared for us ; and we have all the knowledge and skill of our teachers, and of the makers of our materials, at our disposal. If the gift of painting is in us, we can use it without having to spend time and thought upon all these things before we begin to paint.

But seven hundred years ago the laws of perspective were not known, and the laws of light and shade were almost forgotten ; it was very difficult for a painter to get a living model from whom to draw, and neither oil-colours nor water-colours, as we understand them now, had yet

been invented. The great sculptures of Greece and Rome had for the most part been lost, and the subjects of pagan Greece and Rome were not considered proper subjects for Christian painters, so that no one studied even the few ancient sculptures that were available. In those days, if a painter wanted to improve upon the methods of his time, he had to discover for himself, as he went along, how to draw the simplest thing, for there was no one to teach him; he had to be very cautious if he wanted to alter the designs to which people had become accustomed; so progress in painting was very difficult indeed, especially as all pictures were painted on the walls of churches or other public buildings, or upon panels to be placed over altars, so that a man could not paint to please himself, and indeed, unless he was given an order to paint, he had no opportunity to paint at all.

In those days, pictures were painted, not upon light, movable canvases, nor put in frames, to be moved about as anyone wished, from place to place, but on the wall itself; and once they were painted, there they stayed, till the plaster peeled off, or till they were scraped off to make room for new pictures by an artist of a later day; or they were built into richly carved and gilded architectural ornament over the altar, and it was scarcely more easy to move them than if they had been painted on the wall itself. So the people who paid for such pictures were not fond of new experiments. They told their painter exactly what he had to do, and they expected it to be done as it had always been done; indeed, there was a standard arrangement for almost any religious scene, and if, for example, a painter was commissioned to paint a Nativity or an Annunciation, he knew exactly what was meant, down to the smallest detail, and his only chance of being original was to be a better decorator than his fellows, arranging his reds and blues and golds in a more striking or more delicate pattern than they; and even in this he had little room for novelty, for his colours were few and simple. Red, white, and a blue-black, a dull green, and gold, were almost all that he could be certain would come out as he wanted them to do.

Because he knew nothing about perspective, and very little about the anatomy or the foreshortening of the human figure, he could not paint a picture to show figures at different distances or in varied attitudes, nor draw them as though they were standing firmly on the ground; so they had to be on a flat background, generally of gold, all in a row across his picture, as though they were cut out of cardboard and pinned to the wall. As for painting their surroundings, trees and mountains and so on, he never thought of it at all; the most that he could do was to put in a pillar or a couple of arches, if he wanted to signify that the scene was in a church or a house, or to put in the back of a throne behind a seated figure; and even these were very badly drawn as a rule.

It seems strange that if paintings were such bad representations of actual persons and things, anyone should trouble to put them up in churches, or that anyone should trouble to paint; but these pictures, in spite of all their shortcomings, served the purpose for which they were painted. One thing that we must always remember is that without a purpose, no art can exist; and another is, that the art that serves its purpose well is good. Therefore, to see how a painter could be successful, with little knowledge of drawing as we understand it, with few colours and with a stiff and difficult medium, we must know what his purpose was, and how he served it.

From the time when the Christian religion was established by the Emperor Constantine, as the official religion of the Roman Empire, in the year 330, when Constantinople became the capital of Emperors, painting was used in churches to decorate the walls, and to place before the eyes of the worshippers reminders of the teaching of the Church: and, as there could be neither dispute nor argument about that teaching, it was not the business or purpose of the painter to persuade people to believe, but only to remind them of facts about which there was no dispute.

Now, the multiplication table is a fact about which there can be no dispute; but once it has been learned by heart, it is not very interesting. One cannot have any opinion

about it ; seven times nine are sixty-three, and that is an end of it. So it is easy to see that if the Apostles' Creed be regarded as a recital of fact, as much beyond argument as the multiplication table, an artist can no more be expected to paint dramatic pictures of the facts that it states, than a printer can be expected to print the multiplication table as if it were a piece of poetry.

For many hundreds of years, the only people who ever argued or disputed about religion were the theologians, just as nowadays the only people who can find any material for argument in the multiplication table are the mathematicians ; the people for whom the pictures were painted in churches just took their religion for granted ; and consequently, so long as these pictures reminded them clearly of the facts of their faith, and so kept their thoughts on religion while they were in church, they served their purpose ; and as the best way of making them do that was to stick to a familiar arrangement for each scene, and to put in the hand of, or near, each saint, the object with which he was generally associated—his pig with St. Anthony the Hermit, his dragon with St. George, his crocodile with St. Theodore, three golden balls beside St. Nicholas of Myra, and so on—the painter did not need to vary his work, but simply copied the old familiar forms, which became gradually more and more wooden and unreal as time went on. By the end of the 12th century, even the decorative schemes had become so fixed that there was no more life or individuality in pictures than there would be in the repetition of a string of formal phrases of which the meaning had been forgotten.

But about this time all Europe was stirred to a new religious enthusiasm by the preaching of the Crusades. The idea that the Christian religion was something to fight for, made it also something to think about ; and the old stiff symbols of the saints and stories of the faith seemed dull and unsatisfactory. It was only very gradually that painters began to show in their work that they, like everybody else, felt that religion was too interesting to be expressed by the exact repetition of old designs ; not because

they were any slower than the rest of the world to feel this, but because of the difficulty of learning how to make painting express their feelings.

This is always so with art. It is very seldom that an artist is "ahead of his time"; for artists are just human beings like their neighbours, and have the same feelings and opinions and points of view about great questions. It is not very difficult to put new ideas into words, because language is everybody's means of expression, and is used every day to express every kind of idea, and so grows daily with the ideas it has to express: but painting and the other arts are only learnt slowly and by comparatively few people; and so it is much less easy to fit them to new ideas, because those new ideas have to take a very strong hold on people's minds before it becomes really necessary to upset all the old rules of art, and to make new discoveries about drawing and colours and so on, in order to express them in painting.

So we shall see that the history of painting is a kind of illustration of the mind and thought, not only of the artists, but of the time in which they lived.

CHAPTER I

BEGINNINGS OF THE ITALIAN SCHOOLS

IT was not till nearly the end of the 13th century that painters began to break away from the Byzantine tradition, as it is called from Byzantium, the old name of Constantinople before Constantine gave it his own name. At the end of the 8th century, the Christian church had been split up by a difference about doctrine, into the Eastern, or Orthodox, and the Western, or Catholic, churches, the former with its head at Constantinople, and the latter with its head at Rome; but this split had not caused any change in painting, for, while the great theologians might dispute about doctrine, as we have already seen, the best way to instruct ordinary people was by sticking to familiar forms. So the Byzantine forms of painting, which had come down from the church first established as the state church of the Roman Empire at Constantinople, were those which continued to serve for both the Eastern and the Western churches; and indeed even in Italy many of the painters were Greeks.

Although nowadays it is not easy to see much difference between the best and the worst of the few pictures which survive from this Byzantine period, by the middle of the 13th century the names of individual painters began to be recorded because they were reckoned the best of their time. We do not know much about their work on the walls of churches, because, as I have said, the older paintings were mostly scraped off or painted over as taste developed and demanded more life-like work; but a few altar-pieces painted on wood have come down to us, and one of these, by an Italian painter called Margaritone of Arezzo, is now in the National Gallery, London.

Looking at this picture, it is hard to believe that when it was first painted, it was regarded as a very "modern" work, and almost too life-like to be quite proper for a church. The first thing that we shall notice is that it is not one picture, but a large number of little pictures arranged on either side of the picture proper, which is a representation, or rather a symbol, of Our Lady holding

the Christ upon her knee. There is practically no departure from the old-fashioned form in this central panel of the design, for, in Margaritone's day, it would still have been very unsafe to take liberties with so sacred a subject: but in the small panels, for all their clumsy drawing, there is a certain liveliness. These little panels represent a number of scenes in the life of Our Lord, and also a corresponding number of scenes in the lives of various saints, among them St. Nicholas, the sailors' saint, and St. Margaret, who is shown rising out of the burst body of the dragon by which she had been swallowed.

The backgrounds are of gold, and red, black, white and a blue which has darkened with time till it is almost black, are the only colours used. Inscriptions in beautifully formed letters are painted on the backgrounds, and it is easy to see at a glance that the painter did not mean his work to be life-like, even though he tried to make it lively enough to enable us to imagine the scene that it recalled. So far as the figures of Our Lady and the Child are concerned, he has not even done this much, but has only tried to make them fill their space in such a way as to stand out boldly above the altar for which the panel was painted.

This, then, is an advance upon the kind of "picture" which had been good enough for a very long time before Margaritone painted it; but if we compare it with an example of the art of Constantinople of hundreds of years before, we shall find that it is not nearly so good as the older work. Art cannot stand still; if it tries to do so, it goes backwards, and in this it is like every other kind of human knowledge. If nothing is ever added to knowledge, a little gets lost by every generation, till at last only fragments of the original knowledge remain. The reasons of facts get lost to memory, so that the facts themselves become meaningless.

At Ravenna, in the Church of St. Vitale, which was built about A.D. 534, is a great mosaic decoration which was put up in the time of the Emperor Justinian of Constantinople and his wife Theodora. Their portraits are

in it, together with those of many people of their Court, and though the drawing is stiff and unreal, it is the work of a man who had carefully looked at the people he drew, and was working at first hand, so to speak. I doubt whether Margaritone had ever looked at a human figure carefully to see how it was made ; he had only looked at old pictures of it, to see how it was drawn by men who themselves had only copied it from older paintings still, and so his work had lost all touch with reality.

Thus, it was high time that men should get back to the study of real figures and a real world, if their painting was to express the reality of their belief in the things they painted.

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Before we go any further in our study of the history of painting we must turn aside for a little excursion into the history of Italy ; for from now onwards we shall find that the growth of painting in Italy is to be studied in the work of a large number of " schools " of painting to which are given the names of various Italian cities and provinces. These names will mean nothing to us if we fail to realize that each one of these cities or provinces was a little independent state, each with its own surrounding territory and its own form of government and its own army ; that some of them were strong and some were weak, and that most of them hated their neighbours rather heartily. They were often at war with one another, and within each state there were rival parties, each with its leader, who struggled for power against each other ; and while it is true that even in times of war, artists moved about from city to city with a certain amount of freedom, it was only natural that each separate little state should have its own art, in a way which is not nearly so marked in a country that is under a single government.

So when we speak of the Florentine School, and the Sienese School, the School of Milan and the Venetian School, and so on, there is almost as much difference implied as if we spoke of the English School and the French School

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and the German School of painting of to-day ; not quite so much, however, because the religion to which the art was devoted was the same throughout Italy, and Italians of all the city states spoke the same language, or very nearly so.

But from the earliest times there had been many races in Italy. All through history, these various races had to a great extent kept to their own territory, and had clung to their own traditions. So it is not surprising that, when the Roman Empire was at length broken up into many little states, each Italian state should retain the character which had come down to it from the beginning. The Roman was proud and violent. The Tuscan, the descendant to a great extent of the Etruscans of old, was clear-headed, cold-hearted, industrious, and skilful with his hands ; often, too, he was unscrupulous, and, with his quick brain and clever hands, was bolder to make new experiments, and more patient in carrying them through, than his neighbours of Siena, who had softer hearts, and less controlled tempers than he. There was much that was Northern in the people of Lombardy, where Milan lies, and the Milanese were sentimental, and traders rather than craftsmen ; while the history of Venice is that of a people whose natural bent was in the direction of adventure in far lands oversea : we shall see in due time how all these variations of character are shown in the art of the "schools" of these little "nations" as we might almost call them.

A "School of Painting," then, does not mean an art-school, as we use the term. No such thing existed until little more than a century and a half ago : but the word is rightly used, all the same, for the painters of the Middle Ages in Italy were very closely bound together by the conditions under which they learned their craft.

I have used the word "craft" on purpose, because craft, which is the way of doing a thing with one's hands, is all that a man, who seeks to become an artist, can learn from his master. Art is the use to which he puts his craft when he has learnt it. If he has no ideas, no originality, no invention, nothing *of his own* to bring to his work, he may be

a very fine craftsman indeed, but he will never be an artist. There are many craftsmen, because they can be *made*; there are not so many artists, because they must be born, or must make themselves.

Now, painting, in the days when men did but copy what had been done before, was not reckoned an art, but a craft; and if a man decided that his son should follow the craft of painting, he apprenticed him to a painter, that he might learn the craft. If he failed to learn it, it was a pity, because he had wasted his time, and he might well end his days sweeping out a studio, or acting as servant to his more successful fellows. If he learned it well, and yet had not in him the makings of an artist, so that he could never paint a picture on his own account, he still was a qualified craftsman, and could live well and honourably as a journeyman-painter in his master's studio; he would be given the less important work to do upon his master's pictures, or rather, the work that needed nothing but skill of hand; he would gild the backgrounds, or put in the lettering where he was told, or perhaps paint the folds in drapery, or the hair of a figure, or any other thing at which he was particularly good, but he would seldom become a master-painter on his own account. The apprentice who became a master-painter might go into partnership with his teacher, or he might set up an establishment of his own; but by the time that he could venture to do this, it is easy to see that he would have his teacher's way of painting as the foundation of all his work, however much he might improve upon it; so that it is often easy to know from a painter's work, who it was that taught him.

Thus it is quite reasonable to speak of such a group of painters as a "School"; and when we remember that, in order to be allowed to practise as a painter in any city, a man had to join the "Gild" or Association of the Craft, and had to satisfy the members of that Gild that he was a good painter according to the standard of the Gild, we shall see that the painters, say, of Florence, would tend all to work upon much the same lines as one another, so that the "School of Florence" is a good description of

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the group of master-painters who painted and trained apprentices in Florence ; and so, of the work that they produced.

It was because painting was the craft of deco ating buildings with wall-paintings that we shall find many romances in the lives of painters, for a master-painter, when he undertook to paint a whole church, was not expected to do the whole of the work himself ; his would be the design, and he would do the more delicate part of the work with his own hands ; the painters in his employ, who had served their apprenticeship, and had then remained with their master, would do the greater part of the actual painting ; and if there happened to be one or more among whom he could trust to do it, he might even leave the greater part of the actual design to them ; his apprentices would grind the colours, and clean the brushes, and lay the fresh plaster on the walls, upon which the pictures were to be painted before it had time to dry. The master was the practical head of a decorator's establishment ; and it stands to reason that the better staff of assistants he could get together, the more and the better-paid work would come his way. Therefore, a master was always on the look out for promising lads as apprentices, in order to keep up the reputation of his establishment ; and when he found one, wherever it might be, whether it were a shepherd-lad on the hills, trying to draw sketches of his sheep on the whitewashed wall of his cabin, or a nameless orphan cast on the charity of the town, he would try to secure him as an apprentice, and would teach him all the craft that he knew himself ; and in this way great painters came to light and helped to make history.

Thus, though the painting of pictures was in the beginning no more than a trade for skilled craftsmen, it was one which gave to its many humbler members an honourable employment, and, to the few who were capable of seizing it, opportunity of creating great and lasting works of art.

The pictures that we are now going to study are not oil-paintings, for the idea of mixing colours with oil had not

yet occurred to anyone; nor are they water-colours, for painting upon paper was not of any use in those days. The three ways of painting which were used in Italy in the 13th century, were Encaustic, Tempera, and Fresco.

The first of these names, Encaustic, means really "burnt in," and is a very ancient method, for it was used by the Greeks, the Romans, and the Egyptians in Roman times. Actually, it was a process in which the colours were mixed with wax, and were put on to the panel while they were hot. It was a tiresome and rather clumsy method, and as painting became less and less a mechanical craft, it disappeared altogether, and we shall not be much concerned with it.

Tempera painting was done with colours ground to a very fine powder and mixed with the yolk of egg and gum. It was a very much easier method to handle, and soon drove out encaustic painting. Colours so mixed could be thinned till they were almost transparent; and so a painter could paint the whole of the light and shade of his picture, especially the faces and hands—the "modelling," as it is called—in one colour, generally a greenish tint, and could then spread over this modelling thin coats of colour, called "glazes," so as to turn his picture from one in a single colour to one in the natural colours of his subject.

Both these ways of painting were carried out upon wooden panels, but not straight on to the wood itself, for that would have allowed the colours to sink in and look dead and flat. The wood was first covered with a very thin coat of fine plaster or chalk mixed with glue, called "gesso," which gave a beautifully smooth hard surface on which to draw and paint. The paint sank into it just enough to make it hold firmly, and pictures so painted keep the brilliance of their colours wonderfully.

Fresco is quite different from both these. The word is simply Italian for "fresh," and a fresco painting is just one that has been painted on plaster while it is still damp. It was the best process for the decoration of a building, because the plaster was actually part of the wall or ceiling, and also because it could be, and indeed had to be, very

rapidly done, for once the plaster was dry, the colour would not sink in and hold upon it. When a painter was carrying out a design in fresco, he had to begin by making a complete drawing of the whole design to the full size ; then the plaster was put on the wall, covering no more space than he thought he could manage in a day, and the outlines of the design were traced on the wet surface, and the paint spread as rapidly as possible, mostly in flat washes : details were put in with a fine brush, and, as the part demanding great skill was generally the detail of hair, eyes, and the shading of drapery, there is little doubt that the master-painter did all these himself. If there was a great deal of detail in the design, very little plaster would be spread on the wall each day, and thus more time could be given to each portion of the work ; and any plaster left unpainted at the end of a day had to be chipped off, and new plaster (or “intonaco”) laid for the next day’s work.

By far the greater part of the painting of the 13th and 14th centuries in Italy was in fresco, and some of the most important and beautiful work in the world has been done by this method ; but there are only a few fragments in the National Gallery, London, and practically none elsewhere in England, for of course, being part of the wall on which it is painted, it cannot be moved without being almost entirely destroyed. There are some modern frescoes by Lord Leighton in the Victoria and Albert Museum which give some idea of the effect of a wall painted in fresco.

Nearly all the pictures to which I shall now refer are painted in fresco, but the first of all of them, which is an altar-piece, is in tempera. It was reckoned the greatest picture of its time, and when it was carried in procession from the painter’s studio to the chapel of the Rucellai family, in Florence, for which it was painted, all the city was decorated in its honour, and the streets were thronged with people who sought to catch a glimpse of it as it passed by. We may make every allowance for the fact that it was a time of great religious enthusiasm, and that this was a picture of Our Lady and the Holy Child enthroned in the midst of Angels, but even so, I doubt whether in any



CIMABUE
The Madonna and Child
(Florentine)

English town to-day, all the world would make holiday to pay honour to the work of any artist, however great they might think it. That the people of Florence did so shows that the painter had expressed something that they wanted to have expressed, because they felt it themselves, and also that painting seemed to them a natural means of expressing ideas and feelings; and that is tremendously important, because it accounts for the way in which from that time onwards, painting improved so rapidly. It was well worth while to the painter to do his best and to learn more about his art, for he was sure that his fellow-men would understand and appreciate his efforts.

The *Madonna of the Rucellai*, as this picture is called, is the work of a Florentine painter called Cimabue (1240-1302), who was trained in the old Byzantine way of painting. In learning his craft he had never been asked to look at living human beings at all, and had never learned to draw anything more life-like than the wooden figures with expressionless faces and staring eyes that had been handed down from generation to generation of painters; but he had felt that there was something wrong about it all; it was not alive, and therefore it did not satisfy him, for his interest in the *idea* of the picture—the holiness of the subject, and the adoring angels—*was* alive.

So he tried to study life at first-hand. He was not content, as older painters of his own day were, to put two tiny little figures of angels in the corners of the picture to suggest adoration; he tried to paint figures of angels as though he had actually seen them kneeling on either side of the throne, and to represent the actual expression on their faces; and he tried to make the figure of Our Lady a representation of a real woman, really seated on a throne, with a real child standing upon her knee.

He found it very difficult. None of the old pictures helped him, and he had really to look at living people and try to draw what he actually saw. There were no rules to guide him, and he had to puzzle it all out for himself. He gave up trying to represent shadows in the old way, with lines, and learned to build them up with very many tiny

strokes and dots of dark colour, in the way that is called "stippling," and he learned, by his own experience and observation, a little—a very little—about perspective, so that his pictures no longer looked perfectly flat upon their gilded background.

It was a very small advance ; but the great thing about it was that it was an attempt at progress. There is another picture by him, in the Uffizi Gallery at Florence, of the same subject, in which he has represented the throne as though it were built of stone, with little turrets at the corners, and with an open arcade, like a bridge, below it, in which he has put half-length figures of saints (**Madonna and Child*, Uffizi). The drawing of the arches, and of the curved steps and back of the throne, is sadly wrong, but for all that there is some look of reality about it all ; it is plainly the work of some one who was doing his best and thinking earnestly about what he was doing, not that of a man who was copying something of which the meaning was long forgotten.

There are many people who say that no one can be certain that these pictures are really by Cimabue, but that they may be by another painter of Florence who lived at the same time, and whose name has been forgotten : but that does not really matter. What does matter is that Cimabue has been remembered for doing just what we see in these pictures, and that the people of his day recognized that it was worth doing ; and that means that the spell which had bound the art of painting for so many centuries was broken at last.

CHAPTER II

THE ITALIAN SCHOOLS

SO, though we have taken a long time to get to it, this is where our history of painting begins; for it is in the work of Cimabue, and in the work of his great pupil Giotto Bondone (c. 1266-1337), that we begin to see steady progress from generation to generation. From this time onward, there will always be some pupils who are not content with what their master can teach them, but will find out more for themselves, and so add to the knowledge of those who come after them. The starting-point of each succeeding painter is a little further along the road towards the knowledge of right drawing and life-like light and shadow, so that each one has more time in his life of work to carry the art of painting further still.

There is a story, which may very well be true, that Cimabue was once walking in the country outside Florence, when he saw a shepherd-boy, with a piece of burnt stick in his hand, drawing pictures of his sheep upon a wall, and that he took him to his studio to learn painting. That shepherd-boy was Giotto; and at any rate it is pretty certain that Giotto, before he became the pupil of Cimabue, had never copied old pictures, for, except perhaps in a country church, he had never seen any. He just had drawing in him, and his first idea of using his instinct to draw was to copy the living animals he saw about him in his daily work. This was exactly what was needed at such a time; for Giotto had learned to *see* things before he tried to draw them, while the painters who had learned their craft in studios had learned to paint before they learned—if they ever did learn—to look at real things and people. Cimabue the master had the *idea*, which told him that drawing should represent life, but Giotto had no idea that drawing was any use at all if it did *not* represent life, and he could draw almost by instinct; so Cimabue could not have found anyone better to carry on the idea that he had started.

Nor could he have found him at a better time; for in 1226, about fifty years before Giotto was born, a great saint

had died at Assisi in the Umbrian hills, and in his memory a church had been built there—the church of St. Francis, founder of the Franciscan Order of Mendicant (that is, Begging) Friars. So holy was his life, so sweet and lovable was his character, that very soon after his death he was regarded as a saint, and people flocked from far and near to worship where he had lived and taught; and the church of St. Francis, which is really two churches, one above the other, was adorned with paintings on all its walls, and on the vaulted ceiling of the lower church as well. By the time that Giotto was born, many paintings had already been made there, by artists from Rome and Florence and Siena, but they were stiff in drawing and raw in colour, and only a few of them remain. The fame of Cimabue caused the people of Assisi to invite him to paint their church, and after a time we can see plainly that his pupil Giotto was there helping him: soon Giotto was working there alone, and it is at Assisi that we may best understand the development of his art.

In the upper church, a series of twenty-eight pictures, round the lower part of the walls, illustrate events in the life of St. Francis; his charitable gifts in the days when, as the son of a rich man, he had not yet given up all worldly possessions for a life of poverty; the visions that called him to reform the church; his renunciation of riches, despite the anger of his father; how he preached, humbly yet fervently, before the Pope Innocent III, and convinced him of the divine inspiration of his mission; how he preached to the birds and they listened to him; and many another scene of his sincere and simple life of holiness, and of its happy, holy ending.

In the lower church, Giotto went on painting, having learned many lessons from his work in the upper church; in the four triangular spaces of the vaulting over the high altar, he painted allegorical pictures representing Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience, the three vows of the Franciscan Order, and the raising to heaven (or Apotheosis) of St. Francis; and on the walls are scenes from the life of the Saviour. I must not describe them all, for that would take

too long ; but I will point out some things worth noticing, because they show the progress of his art.

First of all, let us remember one thing about the pictures that are concerned with St. Francis of Assisi. At the time that they were painted, there were men still living at Assisi who were born before St. Francis died. There may have been, here and there, very old people who could just remember the Saint while he still lived. So the subject was a new one. There were no rules almost a thousand years old, as to the way in which he and the scenes of his life should be painted. Giotto had a free hand to make up the composition of his pictures as he went along ; and that means that he had to think each picture out, and to consider each incident that he painted, so as to be able to *see it for himself*, and to set it down as *he* saw it, so that others could see it too, and see it in his way. The painter became a teacher, a teller of stories in his own way.

Goethe, the great German lover of art, once wrote that a novel was a work "in which the author begs leave to treat the world after his own fashion. The question therefore is 'has he a fashion?' The rest will attend to itself."

That is just as true about a painter ; and if the painter "has a fashion" of his own, the rest *will* attend to itself, for we shall accept his story as he tells it, and see it from his point of view.

Giotto's *Life of St. Francis* is a novel told in pictures, and it is because he is convinced that it happened just that way, that he convinces us as well. He has, so to speak, "created" a St. Francis, just as Sir John Tenniel "created" an Alice in Wonderland, a Jabberwock, and a Red Queen, whom no artist since he first drew them, can drive out of our minds. To do that, he had to make his pictures as real to us as his imagination was to him. He had to study, not only the expressions upon faces, and the actual shape of human bodies, the positions of bones and muscles in every conceivable attitude of the figure, the way a cloak would fall into folds as one moved this way and that, but also—and this is very important—how to arrange his figures so that the meaning of his picture, and the part played by

this person or that in it, would strike us at once. He had to study, not only action, but the meaning of that action, and he had to take care that the dramatic force of his picture was not crowded out by our interest in his own cleverness.

So his pictures are not merely pictures of figures in attitudes of action, but pictures of people doing something definite, and it matters more to him to show us what they are doing, *and why they are doing it*, than to make a pretty design upon the wall.

Therefore he had to forget all the rules of painting as he had learned them, even from Cimabue himself. Take, for example, his **St. Francis preaching to the Birds*. Cimabue might well have thought how beautiful it was that St. Francis should preach to the birds, but Giotto had to think how St. Francis would preach to birds at all, before he could paint it, and let us see the beauty of it : and so he painted him stooping, so gently, with his hands outstretched, and with a crowd of little birds at his feet, all looking up at him. There are trees—rather clumsy trees, it must be confessed, but still, trees drawn with some understanding of their shape—on either side of the picture, and a great quiet empty space in the middle of the picture, and the outline of a distant hill against the sky. Across that space another bird comes flying down to join the rest. Behind St. Francis stands one of his followers, whose expression and upraised hand show how surprised he is, and yet how quiet he is keeping, for fear of disturbing the miracle of the listening birds ; but neither to the birds, nor to St. Francis, is it any miracle at all. They are all to themselves together in that quiet countryside.

Every one of Giotto's pictures, whether they be of subjects old or new, has this same appearance of being the setting down of a thing that happened as the painter saw it. One feels that Giotto must have shut his eyes and thought it all out till he really saw, in his imagination, St. Francis doing this and that ; and saw too all the surroundings of the act that made it possible.

He painted many other such pictures, every one of them with its story told vividly, simply and dramatically ; the

Life of the Blessed Virgin and of the Christ at Padua, in the Church of Santa Maria dell' Arena, that was called so because it was built where once the arena of a Roman circus stood; the wonderful work at Florence, in the Church of Santa Maria Novella, and many another; and we could spend much time upon the story of his friendship with the great poet Dante, and of his sense of humour, and life crowded with work and with the love of being alive; but there is no room for it all. All I need say is, that even when he was painting subjects that were many centuries old, he learned to make them new, because he saw them for himself in his own way.

Now, in all this work of Giotto, there are two main things to be noticed and remembered. The first is that he is not content to tell us by means of the attitudes and expressions on the faces of the people whom he paints, what their feelings are, but also by the arrangement of them in the picture, he makes it quite clear what he wants our feelings about them to be. If, in a play at the theatre, just at the moment when we ought to be giving the whole of our attention to the words and actions of one person, (because what he did and said were the really important things to make clear the meaning of the whole play), all the minor people crowded round him, so that one could not see him well, nor pick him out as the speaker, we should call it a badly acted play: but if all the minor characters were so grouped as to give that one person complete command of our attention, and served as a kind of setting for him and his words and actions, we should grasp the meaning of the scene at once. In painting, that kind of grouping is called composition, and Giotto had such a strong dramatic sense that he painted all his pictures as though they were scenes in a play. One not only sees the expressions on the faces of his people, but also understands why they are feeling as they do; also, one does not waste time upon all the minor details that go to make up the scene, but goes straight to the most important figure, of which the others are no more than the setting, both in meaning and form.

The second thing to be remembered is this : that however interested he might be in the story he was telling, he never forgot to draw and paint as well as ever he could. We know how irritating and confusing it is when anybody tells a story or a piece of news, and gets so excited about it, that he talks too fast, and muddles up his sentences, so that we miss half the force of what he has to say. A painter does just the same thing when he spends all his time and effort on painting, say, a pair of wonderful eyes, and then, in his hurry to get on to the next face, paints the body and limbs anyhow. Giotto never forgot that the better he knew how to draw, and the more certainly he knew the *reason* for drawing in this way and that, the easier it would be for him to paint the next story that he had to paint. So he was what we may call a scholarly painter, always ready to learn from his own mistakes, and careful not to make the same mistakes again.

Living at the same time as Giotto, in the neighbouring city of Siena, and born a little before him, was a painter named Duccio (1260-1339). We first hear of him in 1278, when he was but eighteen years old, and he was to Siennese painting what Cimabue was to the painting of Florence, the great pioneer, the awakener. The difference between his work and that of any Florentine is astonishing. Putting them side by side, one would say at first sight that the Siennese painter had made by far the greater advance of the two.

His greatest work is the painting over the high altar of the Cathedral at Siena, which he began in 1308, and finished in 1310.* It was not one picture, but a whole gallery of pictures, large and small, painted upon both sides of a great panelled background to the altar. It has not been in the place for which it was painted for over four hundred years, and parts of it are scattered among many collections to-day ; but we can judge from what is left of it Duccio's ideas about painting, and can contrast them with the ideas of the painters of Florence of his own time.

The first thing that strikes us is that there is more feeling than thought in all his work. We cannot quite tell why,



DUCCIO
The Three Marys at the Tomb
(*Sieneſe*)

for the figures are arranged in groups that have a good decorative effect, the colours are strong, and the draperies are graceful : but somehow the arrangement looks too formal and set—as if it had been rehearsed—for the very strong expression on the faces, and the keenness of the gaze of the eyes. The reason is simply this. Duccio did not go a single step beyond *expression*. He did not think out new compositions for his pictures, but simply took the old Byzantine compositions, and by making the lines and shadows of the draperies more graceful and more emphatic, and the faces more lively, gave an appearance of movement and vigour to his pictures ; but he did not learn a single new thing about the drawing of the figure, nor attempt to represent it in any attitude that had not been drawn thousands of times before, so that all the liveliness of his figures is on the surface ; there is no real knowledge underneath it.

The Sienese painters had always been fond of detail. Even their gold backgrounds are stamped and engraved with delicate and beautiful designs ; and so they went on painting little pictures in rich gilded settings, like jewels of colour that needed to be looked at closely : and the details of hair and eyes, and richness of colour, mattered more to them than bold grouping or truth of drawing. They were a gay people, with quick and violent feelings that did not go very deep, and it mattered more to them to express feeling strongly than to make plain the reason for it : and therefore it did not seem necessary to them, nor to their painters, that the figures in their pictures should be very real, so long as each face, as one looked at it separately, was full of expression. The pictures of Duccio give one the impression that everyone in them is greatly excited, but what they are excited about does not matter very much.

Perhaps I have put this rather strongly ; but what I want to emphasize is the difference in point of view between a steady people like the Florentines, and a flighty people like the Sienese. Once that is clear, it is easy to see how it was that the Florentines went on painting better and better, while the Sienese never got beyond a certain point, and that not a very high one, although every now and then they

produced an artist who was able, by sheer enthusiasm, to paint very beautiful and stirring pictures, as we shall see. They could never stick to any one idea long enough to carry it right through, and so, in the end, they failed, because they would always sooner find the short way of luck to success, than go by the high road of hard work and thought.

The painter who, in the history of Siena, most closely corresponds to Giotto is Simone Martini (1283-1344). In some respects his work is more attractive than that of the great Florentine, for there appears to be in it a greater ease and simplicity. Giotto was so earnest a learner and so careful a student of everything that could help him to advance in the mastery of his art, that he sometimes makes us feel that his pictures were painted more as examples of composition than for the sake of their beauty or meaning : whereas Simone Martini does not trouble about composition at all, nor indeed about anything but the varied and rather disconnected human interest of the separate faces in his pictures. While we may see at a glance what a picture by Giotto is about, we find, before a picture by Simone, that we have spent quite a considerable amount of attention upon all the people in the picture, their expressions, attitudes, costumes and the like, before beginning to realize their relation to one another at all ; this is because his compositions are not balanced ; he has never thought of his subject as a whole at all, nor tried to see with his mind's eye how the incident that he depicts might have happened. His interest is sentimental, not dramatic.

Yet this very sentimentality is the cause of the charm of his painting ; and it is a very fortunate thing that his work is to be seen, side by side with that of Giotto, at the Church of St. Francis at Assisi, where he painted a series of frescoes representing scenes in the life of St. Martin : for thus we are able to see how the Sienese makes up, in tenderness and sweetness, for his failure to attain to the strength and dramatic force of the Florentine.

Speaking generally, while the faces of Simone's figures are varied and life-like in expression, the figures are coarsely

drawn and rather clumsy ; the hands are slender and soft, and often very graceful, but the bodies give the impression of being rather fat and flabby, compared with the spare vigour of those of the Florentine School, and they straggle rather aimlessly across the space that they are intended to fill. A good example of these characteristics is **The Knighting of St Martin* in which the Emperor Julian girds on the sword of the knightly saint, in the presence of courtiers and musicians. If this picture be compared with the *Renunciation of the World by St. Francis*, by Giotto, it will be seen at once, that while the one is a rambling story in which quite unimportant details, such as the expression of a lute-player, distract us from the main figures, because these are given no dramatic prominence, the other, though it contains far more action, and many more figures, goes straight to the point, and leaves us in no doubt as to the meaning of the scene.

However, unlike Giotto, Simone travelled far from Italy and was engaged upon great works in Avignon, both at the cathedral and in the palace of the Popes ; here also, he is said to have painted the portrait of Laura, the lady to whom the poet Petrarch dedicated his sonnets. He died at Avignon in 1344.

Lippo Memmi was Simone's brother-in-law and worked with him a great deal : but when he was not under the direct influence of the greater painter, he had a style of his own which is marked by great tenderness and grace, and also by a sad feebleness in drawing. His colouring is livelier than, and not so yellow as, that of Simone, and the minute decorative detail of his gilded backgrounds is in the true Sienese tradition.

The Sienese School, however, produced two painters, the brothers Pietro and Ambrogio Lorenzetti, who, though they are entirely Sienese in their sentimentality, have so much dramatic force and intensity of feeling as to be worthy of comparison with the greatest of the Florentine painters of the 14th century. It is true that they never gave serious study to drawing, anatomy, or composition, and that their work lacks the ordered and logical qualities of that of

Giotto, but none the less, they were both so tremendously in earnest that everything they painted conveys a sense of truth and reality, in spite of its many faults of execution.

Pietro, the elder, was born at the end of the 13th century, and so was a contemporary of Simone. He is known to have been painting as early as 1305, and in 1326 he painted an altar-piece of which portions still exist at Siena; and at Sta. Maria delle Pieve at Arezzo is another altar-piece, built up of many compartments, of which the five largest contain pictures of Our Lady and the Child, and four saints. The broad forehead, finely arched brows, sensitive mouth and full throat of Our Lady, and the intensity of her gaze, give an impression of life and depth of feeling strangely contradicted by the flat formal drawing of the drapery: but the hands are drawn with care, and the nestling attitude of the Child, and the confident expression on his face upturned to his Mother, are charmingly caught. Just such another painting is that of **Our Lady and the Child between SS. Francis and John*, in the lower church at Assisi, with the same faults of drawing and the same tenderness of expression. These are people whom we feel we know, and they stand out from their gold background rather by force of personality than by drawing or perspective.

The brother of Pietro, Ambrogio Lorenzetti, even surpassed Pietro in the fire and strength that he put into the rendering of expression; and in variety of attitude and boldness of drawing he went far beyond him: yet, in his great works, the frescoes of *Good and Bad Government* in the Palazzo Communale at Siena, the decorative unity is broken up by confusing scrolls and inscriptions, and the over-elaborate allegory is difficult to follow, for it is wholly lacking in the sense of dramatic simplicity which marks the work of Giotto. In drawing, too, it is a queer mixture of careless failure and accidental success. The figure of *Peace*, seated easily on a richly decorated couch, and resting her olive branch lightly on her knee, is very incorrect anatomically but extraordinarily graceful and natural in effect, and the face is almost portrait-like in its rendering of character, utterly unlike the sternly accurate and wholly

impersonal masks of so many of the actors in the drama of Giotto's pictures.

Indeed, these two brothers sum up the whole history of the Sieneſe School of painting, and mark its highest point of real achievement: for as time went on, the Sieneſe painters fell further and further behind in the race with the rest of Italy, and there is as much life and reality in the Child of Lippo Memmi's (1283-1341) **Madonna and Child* in the Berlin Museum, as there is in the angels of Matteo di Giovanni's *Assumption* in the National Gallery, London, painted fully 150 years later, though the later work is, naturally, better drawn, and shows more knowledge of the handling of light and shade. Sieneſe ſucceſs in art depended upon ſentiment far more than upon ſcience. Conſequentially, the craft of painting only improved very fitfully, and depended upon outside influence more than upon any effort on the part of the Sieneſe themſelves. It is not until nearly the end of the 15th century that the Sieneſe made any real effort to ſhake off the old Byzantine traditions that had ſerved them ſo long, and when they did ſo, it was mainly as the reſult of outside influence.

D. Beccafumi (1486-1551) can almoſt bear comparison with the great painters of his day. His perſpective, though not faultleſs, is convincing: his graduation of colour, and handling of light and ſhadow, bear comparison even with the great Umbrians; the influence of Perugino, and, in time, of Raphael, was being ſtrongly felt in Siena, and, through the Lombard pupil of Leonardo da Vinci, Bazzi (il Sodoma) (1477-1549), who ſettled in Siena, that of Leonardo as well. The Sieneſe group of painters of this time, Pacchiarotti (1474-1540), Peruzzi (1481-1537), who learned much from Sodoma, Pacchia (1477-1535) and Beccafumi, were ſcarcely attached to the old Sieneſe traditions, but rather built up an art gathered from the examples of the Umbrian and Florentine Schools of their time, adding their own ſweetneſs of ſentiment and almoſt hysterical intensity of emotion to it. A good example of this is Beccafumi's **St. Catherine before a Crucifix* (Pinacoteca, Siena), which is Umbrian in deſign with its open,

distant landscape and golden sky, but Siennese in its liveliness of expression, and in the crowded detail of its upper part. Even Sodoma, Lombard though he was, soon picked up the Siennese love of detail and ornament, and of exaggerated emotional effect, as in his **Vision of St. Catherine*, in S. Domenico at Siena ; here, there is nothing left of the lessons of Leonardo da Vinci, his master, save a certain resemblance in cast of features ; the colour is cold and subdued, it is true, but the swooning saint, and her sympathetic companions at the foot of the cross, make a warmly emotional appeal.

We have been carried by this rapid survey of Siennese development, far beyond the point at which we left the story of Florentine painting. The pupils of Giotto carried its development very little further than he himself had done, and had none of his great power of dramatic design. Taddeo Gaddi (1300-1366), though his drawing of drapery was free, and his composition graceful and decorative, had little or no dramatic feeling. In his **Presentation in the Temple* (Uffizi), the movement of the figures is well balanced, though without much meaning, and he shows a slight advance in the understanding of a simple kind of perspective ; Spinello Aretino (c. 1333-1410), who followed in the tradition of Giotto, but worked mainly in his native city of Arezzo and later in Siena, was far bolder and more dramatic than any other painter of his time, but his drawing shows a falling off, rather than an advance, in accuracy.

Andrea da Cione (1308-1368) commonly called Orcagna—the Archangel—from his commanding character and from his eminence as a painter of the angelic hosts, had some of the fire and strength of Giotto, a rich sense of the decorative arrangement of colour, and great power in drawing facial expression. The great altar-piece of the *Coronation of the Virgin*, in the National Gallery, London, well displays both his powers and the narrow limits of the art of painting in his time, for it is still purely decorative in intention and feeling : but the work of Masolino (1384-1435), the pupil of Orcagna, shows a remarkable advance



TADDEO GADDI
The Presentation in the Temple
(Florentine)

in many respects. In his **Madonna and Child with Angels* at Empoli, we seem first to be concerned with a merely decorative group designed to fill the head of an arch; but then we are struck by the easy pose of the child, and by the graceful and natural sweep of Our Lady's robe, and realize that we have to do with the work of a man who is using his eyes, and as far as possible painting what he sees; and though the expression of all the faces is very quiet, it is very much alive.

The next step forward is tremendous. An associate and perhaps a pupil of Masolino was Masaccio (1402-1428), who in his short life carried painting forward in one great stride from the stage in which it was still scarcely more than a suggestion, to that in which it was a representation of a scene. We may say that while the actors in a picture by Giotto and his immediate followers performed their parts before a backcloth, those of Masaccio had the whole depth of the stage behind them, and had room to move. True, in the centre of the picture, he keeps them well to the front, to serve the decorative purpose of filling the space, but on either side they are set further back, to give still greater prominence to the central characters: and what is more, the central group itself is made up of figures, some near and some further away, and the nearest figures are those in which light and shade are most strongly contrasted and in which colour is purer and more powerful. In other words, Masaccio, fully fifty years before his time, realized the effect of atmosphere on colour, and painted not only the figures but the space in which they moved. Still further, he studied anatomy and the foreshortening of men and animals to such purpose that there was scarcely an action or an attitude that he could not portray. All these qualities may be seen in his **Adoration of the Magi* in the Berlin Museum, and in this picture, as in the famous *Tribute Money* in the Carmine, Florence, it will be seen that the landscape background is far behind the figures. Nothing in the whole of the *Adoration* strikes the eye more forcibly than the two foreground figures in their grey cloaks. Despite its richer colour, the scarlet coat of the man

further back in the very centre is less prominent. It was long before any real advance was made on the achievement of this young painter ; but the spur that he gave to Florentine painting drove it forward to new effort which lasted till the coming of the Renaissance opened to Italy the sources of learning, and solved the problems that Masaccio was the first Italian to attack.

It is possible that Masaccio was helped by the influence of the great sculptor Donatello, whose life-work illustrates the development from the mediæval to the Renaissance point of view of art. From now onwards, we shall have to consider two contemporary lines of development in Florentine painting, the one descending direct from the pure painting tradition of Giotto, and the other strongly influenced by the art of sculpture as represented by Donatello. The former is that which leads us through Fra Angelico to the art of Filippo Lippi and Botticelli to that of Albertinelli, Fra Bartolommeo and Andrea del Sarto, and the latter, through Paolo Uccello and Andrea del Castagno, to the Pollaiuoli, and through Verrocchio and Domenico Ghirlandajo to Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo : very broadly, the first may be called the line of idealism, and the second the line of realism.

Beside Masaccio, the gentle pious painter Fra Angelico (c. 1387-1455) is but a child. Through Lorenzo il Monaco, a Sienese by birth, but a follower of the School of Giotto, he was a descendant of the pure Giottesque tradition untouched by the bold adventures of Masolino and Masaccio, and his main interest was in the dramatic and decorative feeling, rather than in the natural setting of his subjects. From Lorenzo, most likely, he derived the peculiarly pure and delicate colour of which he was a master, and from his own gentle temperament the quality of sweetness which fills all his work. An inmate of the Convent of S. Marco at Florence, his painting was his prayer, and every work of his was an act of devotion. His works are often on a small scale, such as the *Predella* (lowest border panel of an altar-piece) in the National Gallery, London (663), representing Christ in Glory among saints and angels, and he painted each figure on

the plain gold background with the minute precision of a miniature. He did not greatly vary the traditional rendering of sacred subjects, and his **Annunciation* in the convent of S. Marco is but little different in arrangement from many earlier works, but every flower in the little patch of garden is painted lovingly, and the Angel and Our Lady incline towards one another, not merely in decorative balance, but the one with reverence and the other in humility. Anatomy may be faulty and perspective uncertain, but all the work of Fra Angelico, whether in tempera or fresco, on a small or larger scale, has the same freshness and sincerity and happiness; and now and then, as in the **Noli me Tangere*, or in the *Agony in the Garden*, frescoes in his own convent, he touches the strong dramatic feeling of Giotto himself. The bowed figure of Our Lady, seated apart, suffering with her Son while his dearest disciples sleep, is not only a wonderful piece of drawing, but a marvelous touch of added tragedy that could only have been conceived by a tenderly sympathetic mind.

Fra Filippo Lippi (1406-1469) who had neither the piety of Fra Angelico nor the power of Masaccio, yet combined in some degree the qualities of both. In his **Annunciation* in the National Gallery, London (66), the angel is friendly as well as reverent, and Our Lady has none of the ethereal loveliness of Fra Angelico's rendering: but there is a roundness in the forms, and a vigour in the lights and shades, and a sense of space in the setting, which show that Masaccio's work had not been in vain. The colour has not the dainty brightness of the older work, but it gives the impression of being part of the things it represents, not merely a decorative surface; and in his *St. John the Baptist with SS. Cosmas and Damian and other Saints*, also in the National Gallery, London (667), the variety of attitude, expression and character, and the suggestion of space behind the stone bench upon which the figures are seated, show a liveliness of observation and have an interest which are entirely new in religious painting. Beside such a picture as this, the work of a slightly younger contemporary, Pesellino (1422-1457), looks almost old-fashioned; but in his **Madonna and Child*,

Saints and Angels at Empoli, which is a fair example of the more orthodox religious painting of the time, there is considerable freedom of drawing and strength of modelling; and when we place his work beside that of any Florentine painter before Masaccio, we realize how much progress has been made in less than half a century; the difference between Pesellino and his contemporaries was not so much one of progress in skill as of progress in ideas. Benozzo Gozzoli, who was born about the same time as Pesellino (1420 or 1424-1498), though he was a pupil and even at first a rather slavish imitator of Fra Angelico, was carried forward on the new tide of humanism which had begun to sweep through Italy with the coming of refugees from the crumbling Empire of Byzantium, for they were bringing with them the key to the treasures, long lost to Italy, of ancient Greek literature, its poetry, its philosophy, and, above all, its romance, its intense human interest: and when, in 1453, Constantinople fell, the tide became a flood, and religion was no longer the sole source of inspiration to the painter, though his subjects were still in the main taken from religion and painted in the service of the church. So, when about 1458, five years after the last Christian Emperor of Constantinople had died fighting nobly on the broken ramparts of his doomed city, Benozzo set to work to paint the walls of the Riccardi chapel for the Medici family in Florence, he chose the **Journey of the Three Kings to Bethlehem* for his subject, and painted it, not as a picture of a familiar fact of religion, but as a story newly told in a new way, crowded with splendours of dress and jewellery, and with humours of character and incident. The procession winds its way among the hills, glittering and gay with varied colour. The air is full of angels making merry among the tops of formal little trees, and the packed crowd of faces is full of varied expressions; the drawing is often coarse and faulty, and the perspective is utterly unsound; but the whole thing is alive from end to end. It is said that the magnificent figure of the youngest King, in his raiment of white and gold, and mounted on his great slow-pacing white steed, is a portrait of a prince of the Imperial Byzantine house of

Paleologue. If that be so, then this picture marks with a white figure, unforgettably, the coming of the Renaissance to Italian art.

In the work of Alessandro Filipepi (1466-1510), better known by his nickname of Botticelli, we see the process of the transformation of Florentine art from mediæval to Renaissance ideals completed. We might almost call it the paganizing of art. Beginning as a pupil, or at least a follower, of Fra Filippo Lippi, he gave to his rendering of the familiar religious subjects a greater precision and elaboration of drawing, a greater variety of grouping and attitude, and a depth and force in the rendering of both human forms and drapery, plainly derived from the study of ancient sculpture and of classical forms. Though, in his earliest work, he still clings to the flat decorative effect obtained by filling his whole space with figures and with an architectural background, yet each figure stands out independently, and beyond the architectural settings there are glimpses of delicately painted distance, clear and sharp in detail, but faint and far in tone compared with anything before his time. Moreover, in the rendering of individual character he makes an enormous advance on all his predecessors, as we may see in the wonderful "tondo" (round panel) called the **Madonna of the Pomegranate* in the Louvre, or the still more exquisite **Madonna of the Magnificat* in the Uffizi at Florence. In both these pictures, though each face wears the same expression of tender melancholy, each one is a living individual, different in personality from all the others; and though in each picture every attitude is controlled by a perfect sense of decorative design, all are free and natural and unconstrained. In the *Madonna of the Magnificat* all the lines of the design swirl round the little landscape that appears between the figures, like the colours on the surface of a bubble, in perfect harmony with the enclosing circle, and yet are not aimless, for all lead to the gentle face of the Madonna, and to the crown that is held above her bowed head by adoring angels.

Intensely tender though these earlier religious pictures by Botticelli be, they are rather sentimental than religious;

it is the decorative romance of religion that he expresses, not its essential truth : and so it is not surprising to find, on the one hand, more strength and conviction in his portraits, and on the other, more bold originality and variety in his classical and allegorical pictures ; and because he painted above all for the sake of beauty rather than for the sake of expressing any idea by its means, it is natural that his own melancholy and brooding nature should leave its mark on all his work alike. We see it even in the simple portrait of **Piero Lorenzo de' Medici* (Uffizi), with its gaunt modelling of the structure of the face, and strong opposition of the black dress and scarlet cap. The hands are strangely placed, holding a gold medal rigidly forward in front of the right breast and giving an uncanny stillness to the whole head and shoulders, which is yet further enhanced by the sharp silhouette of the head against the sky. All Botticelli's work has this stillness, as though, having fixed his design, he made sure that no impression of movement should distract our minds from its perfection. His **Mars and Venus* (N.G. 915), though Mars sleeps uneasily, ready to wake for war, though Venus reclines in exquisitely supple ease, each fold of her drapery clinging softly to her figure, and though baby satyrs play cheerfully with the weapons of the sleeping god, and one blows a conch-shell in his ear, is an unalterably balanced design, lovely in the purity of its drawing and the delicate precision of its modelling. His **Birth of Venus* (Uffizi) is full of fluttering draperies and dancing ripples of water ; the figure of Venus herself, an exquisitely modelled nude, is sinuous and light as air ; but the design conquers all, and the very flowers that float upon the breeze have found their places and can never move ; and for all the elaborate variety and studied grace of that great masterpiece the **Primavera* (Spring) (Uffizi), Mercury, the Graces and the breezes, the flying god of Love-in-Springtime, and Primavera herself, are figures in an enchanted wood struck motionless in beauty that is not the beauty of each, but of all together, that would be spoiled by the movement of a finger or a flower.



BOTTICELLI
Judith with head of Holofernes
(Florence)

Art that had beauty only for its aim could go no further, and it is only his strong individuality that saves the work of Botticelli from utter coldness. "Art for art's sake" never had a more convincing exponent; but in the end, even he himself felt the need for some more powerful incentive to creation than mere love of form and pattern and line; and when the monk Savonarola preached furiously against ancient paganism and all its beauties as the enemies of the faith, Botticelli abandoned his art, and for twelve years painted no more, till in the last year of his life he painted one more picture, the **Nativity* in the National Gallery, London (N.G. 1034), the first and only of all his works in which there is passionate feeling, exultant joy and deep religious conviction; and in this one picture there is movement too, in the whirling garland of angels in the sky above the thatched stable that is filled by the silver radiance of the Child.

Botticelli, like his great contemporary Mantegna at Padua, whom we shall consider later, almost succumbed to the fascination of art itself to the extent of losing sight of the human emotions that it was created to express. But it was a passing phase, and his pupils and followers show a swift return to sentiment. Filippino Lippi (1457-1504) has not the perfect design of Botticelli, nor his clean incisiveness of line, nor his tenderness of colour; but in his **Madonna Adoring* (Uffizi) there is an exquisite sincerity of feeling, both in the rendering of the Mother and the Child, and an impression of life, which do not detract at all from the beauty of the pictorial design: and in the solidity of the forms, and in the way in which the landscape stretches out into the distance, he leaves Botticelli far behind. The same qualities, together with a lively interest in natural forms, may be seen in his *Madonna and Child with SS. Jerome and Dominic* (N.G. 293), where the oak and ash trees in the background are most carefully observed and rendered, and the deep golden tone of the foreground and middle distance is beautifully maintained. The picture is not so much decorative as realistic, in spite of the unreality of the more distant landscape, and there is

not the faintest suggestion of that lack of interest in the meaning of the subject which sometimes spoils our enjoyment, on any other than purely æsthetic grounds, of the work of Botticelli.

Closely associated with Botticelli, though not his pupil, was Piero di Cosimo (1462-1521), a pupil of Cosimo Rosselli; he too drew upon classical legend for his subjects, and upon classical models for his art, but in a romantic spirit which gives his work a much more human attraction. His **Death of Procris* (N.G. 698) illustrates this aspect of his work. It is richer in colour, and rounder in modelling, than the work of Botticelli, and much more observant of real life. The limp form of the dead Procris, with the wound in her throat, of the arrow shot unwittingly by her husband Cephalus, is full of pathos, and the figures of the kneeling Satyr at her head, with his air of bewildered sympathy, and of the hound who sits gravely at her feet, each with a little flowering bush behind him, though rather clumsy as parts of a decorative design, are perfect in their appropriateness to suggest the pitifulness of an unforeseen calamity, which is beautifully carried out by the quietude of the distant scene of shore and mountain. We have got to the point at which a painter can tell a romantic story, and tell it very well.

The idealistic and predominantly decorative character of the work of those Florentine painters whom we have considered hitherto was in the pure tradition of the art of painting, and was scarcely touched by the vigorous spirit of realism which is the natural outcome of the influence of sculpture: but when we come to the art of three great painters who mark the highest achievement of the idealists, we find them so strongly influenced by something that they could never have learned from Cosimo Rosselli or his pupil Piero di Cosimo, something that is so utterly unlike the decorative remoteness from reality of Botticelli, that we are bound to seek its cause.

In the work of these painters, Fra Bartolommeo (1475-1517), Albertinelli (1474-1515), and Andrea del Sarto (1486-1531), there is, it is true, a very perfect under-

standing of decorative balance both of forms and colours, and a quiet finality of design which is in the true idealistic tradition ; but there is also a far more convincing expression of distance and space, and of the solidity and weight of figures, than in any work of their teachers and forerunners in that tradition.

This is not difficult to understand when we realize that, side by side with the school to which they owed their training, there had been growing up in Florence an even greater school of painting that derived its inspiration, not from the tradition of the painted wall, but from life itself, and aimed, not at the compression of life within the limits of a decorative design, but at the extension of the art of painting to include within its scope the representation of everything the eye could see, and of every emotion that the mind could feel.

It was while Masaccio was living that this movement of untiring experiment had begun, and he himself was touched by it; but it was among the painters who came more directly within the influence of his contemporary, the great sculptor Donatello (1386-1466), that realism made the strongest headway ; and almost all the Florentine realists, from Donatello's day down to that of Michelangelo, were sculptors, whether in stone or bronze, or on a smaller scale, in gold and silver, as well as painters ; and more than one of them were architects as well. Painting was to them not the only art, with ancient limitations of its own that might not be changed, but one of many arts, and bound to keep pace in realism with the others.

So, Andrea del Castagno (1390-1457), a man of violent temper and little education, learned by direct observation of nature to paint, in fresco and in tempera, figures that are almost like statues, so strong they are in modelling. His colour is harsh, and his drawing is bold almost to brutality, as may be seen in his portrait of **Dante*, standing out against its dark architectural niche, that is painted with a realism equal to that of the figure itself. He may have been influenced by Masaccio, but it was mainly from Donatello's sculpture that he took his earliest inspiration in artistic design ; and a famous work of his is his portrait of

Niccolò da Tolentino, which actually imitates sculpture, and represents, in monochrome, the great soldier mounted on horseback, on a sarcophagus resting on brackets on the wall of the Cathedral at Florence.

Just such another "sculpture picture" was that of the English soldier of fortune, Hawkwood, in S. Maria del Fiore at Florence (1397-1475), by Paolo Uccello. It is a most remarkable exercise in perspective; for, painted high on the church wall, it represents, like Castagno's work, a sarcophagus on brackets, surmounted by the figure of Hawkwood on horseback, and clad in armour, and is drawn with careful regard to the fact that it is intended to be seen from below; and all the foreshortening is most skilfully adapted to this point of view: again the whole work, except the red saddle and bridle, and the red background against which the "statue" stands, is in monochrome: and the same means of increasing the resemblance to sculpture are used in the frescoes by Uccello in the cloisters of S. M. Novella. Perspective, indeed, was his passion, as we can see plainly in the wonderful picture by him in the National Gallery, London, the **Rout of San Romano*, in which Niccolò da Tolentino, on a great white horse, leads the forces of Florence to victory against those of Siena. Though the figures are skilfully arranged in the foreground, a kind of narrow stage backed by a hedge of roses, so as to form a decorative design, every detail is an exercise in foreshortening; and the group of mounted knights on the left, and their horses, are presented in attitudes chosen for the difficulties of drawing that they present. The whole effect, it is true, is very still and rather wooden, but the advance in realism, when compared with the work even of Masaccio, is positively astounding. The perspective in the background has got out of hand, and has run up so steeply as quite to shut out the sky, and the foreshortened figure of the dead man on the ground is grotesquely out of drawing; but the attempt at realism is what matters, for it shows that the painter has struck out a new road, which others will be bound to follow.

Two painters, whose work was done so much together that it is almost impossible to distinguish between them,

and who owe much to Andrea del Castagno their teacher, and to Uccello, while showing a great advance on both, are Antonio (1432-98) and Piero (1443-96) Pollaiuolo. Their resemblance to Castagno consists in their harsh drawing and the haunting resemblance of many of their single figures (such as the **David, Victor with the Head of Goliath*, at Berlin), to statues in an architectural setting : and we are reminded of the aims of Uccello by such a picture as that of the *Martyrdom of St. Sebastian* in the National Gallery, London (N.G. 292), with its many figures in varied attitudes, and the arbitrary division between the foreground and the background, which runs up to an unnaturally high sky-line. The wiry line of the drawing and the beautifully minute rendering of detail—such as the cross-bow of one of the executioners of S. Sebastian—are due to the training of the artists as goldsmiths ; and the same characteristics are to be seen in the work of Domenico Ghirlandajo (1449-1494), who, as his name implies, was a goldsmith—a “garland-maker” of leaves and flowers in elaborate metal-work : but Ghirlandajo, while he seems to return, to some extent, to decorative ideas, gave to decoration a new meaning : for, whereas Uccello and the Pollaiuoli had compromised between decoration and realism by separating their pictures into two planes, the foreground and the background, making the one a separate decorative design placed, as it were, in front of the other, Ghirlandajo turned *design* into *composition*, by making both foreground and background play their part in a single design. He owed as much to the study of Masaccio, who had first ventured along this unexplored path, as to the teaching of Baldovinetti (1427-1499), his master. For though Baldovinetti, who was probably a pupil of Paolo Uccello, and must have been influenced by the rather mysterious Domenico Veneziano (? 1400-1461), knew well enough how to place his figures in a near or distant setting, he was never able to suggest the intervening space as we have seen that Masaccio tried to do ; but Ghirlandajo, though his art came slowly to its perfection, in the end far surpassed all his predecessors in the placing and grouping of his figures in majestically

spaced design, and in perfect proportion to and harmony with their surroundings. When he had overcome his early fault of darkening his colour at the outline of his figures, which made them seem flat and harsh against their background, he was unsurpassed in sculptural grandeur; and in the frescoes of the life and death of Sta. Fina at S. Gimignano, the architectural setting so beautifully echoes in its lines the grouping of the figures in each scene, that it is impossible to think of the figures without the background, or of the background without the figures. In the **Burial of Sta. Fina*, we see at once the memory of Giotto and the foreshadowing of Michelangelo. If he has a fault, it is that the stillness of marble seems to hold these wonderfully drawn human forms, and even the fluttering draperies which he drew so well; but this at least may be said, that even when, as in the *Adoration of the Shepherds* in the Accademia at Florence, he goes straight to nature for his human types, and renders them with vivid realism, he is always grave and grand; and when, as in the same picture, the composition is made up, almost in equal portions, of near and distant masses, the separate portions are always linked by echoed forms, like the pillars of the ruin in the right foreground, and those of the archway in the distance on the left. A moment's comparison with Botticelli's *Adoration of the Magi* in the National Gallery, London, will show at a glance what a world separates the aims of these two contemporary painters.

Indeed, there were many among the realists themselves who were far enough from Ghirlandajo. He was the master of Michelangelo, and if we set him beside Verrocchio, the master of Leonardo da Vinci, we shall have an immediate insight into the profound difference between those two greatest masters of Florentine painting.

Verrocchio was far more a sculptor than a painter. The designer of the noblest equestrian statue in the world, that of Colleoni at Venice, he was the possessor of a perfect eye for dignified and balanced form, which he may well have derived directly from Donatello: as a goldsmith, he had a love and a mastery of delicate detail; and as a draughts-

man, he is unsurpassed in both these qualities. As a painter, he reminds us—as in the **Baptism in Jordan* in the Accademia at Florence—of the rather hard and over-emphatic drawing of the Pollaiuoli, his contemporaries and competitors. But in this picture colouring and modelling are more delicate, more full of feeling, and the figures belong more naturally to their setting. Though the figure of the Christ is drawn with minute anatomical accuracy, reminding us of Verrocchio's calling as a sculptor, it is by no means a picture of a statue, but of a human form: and the exquisite figure of the golden-haired angel, kneeling at the left of the picture, is full of movement, for all the sculptural play of form and light and shadow in the drapery.

As a painter, Verrocchio is thoughtful, contemplative rather than dramatic, mystical rather than dogmatic. He is never primarily decorative in intention, if we may judge so broadly, seeing that the picture we have considered is the only one universally acknowledged to be his; nor does he seek realism except as a means of expressing clearly the intention of his work. As a craftsman, he seems to have used mostly tempera, though with experiments in the oil-medium.

Of his two pupils, Lorenzo di Credi (1459-1537) sinks too often into mere prettiness; he exaggerates tenderness of modelling into plumpness of form, and his colour is pure and gay rather than soft and brilliant; his drawing of drapery is wonderful, and his rendering of its texture and substance redeems it from being merely sculptural; but there is more of sentimentality than of thought in his attitude towards his subjects. On the other hand, Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), his fellow-pupil, was an intellectual giant. Like his master Verrocchio, he was painter, sculptor and goldsmith, and in addition singer and musician, mathematician, engineer, inventor, and philosopher. In his latter years, he was wont to say, in no boasting spirit, but simply as a matter of fact, that he possessed all human knowledge: and, so far as the knowledge of his day went, it was probably true. Apprenticed to Verrocchio at an early age, he soon surpassed his master as a painter; and

his drawings that survive show him to have been a draughtsman of marvellous invention and skill. His sketch for **Our Lady on the Knees of St. Anne* is in the Diploma Gallery at Burlington House, and well illustrates this wonderful facility.

It is difficult to characterize his work as a painter in a few words. The most famous works among the very few that are certainly his, are **The Last Supper* at Sta. Maria della Grazia in Milan, painted soon after his arrival there in 1483; the **Mona Lisa* in the Louvre, painted between 1498 and 1504; and the **Madonna of the Rocks* in the Louvre. The similar picture in the National Gallery, London, has been disputed, but is, I think, quite certainly by him; and the **Head of Christ* in the Brera at Milan can scarcely be the work of any other hand. In these, as indeed in all his known works, there are three great qualities, namely, dignity, mystery, and understanding of, rather than sympathy with, human nature. His colour is sober, even to the point of becoming sombre, and his modelling is minutely delicate, without ever becoming sculptural; indeed, the modelling of flesh, in his work, always has a wonderful suggestion of suppleness.

His pictures give a first impression of great sweetness, but this never becomes prettiness, for we gradually become aware, in studying them, of the presence of a kind of grim humour underlying them, as though the painter were amused at the impression that his work has made upon us. The mysterious smile of *Mona Lisa* is famous all over the world, but *Our Lady*, and *Saint Anne*, and the *Madonna of the Rocks*, all smile to themselves, as it were at their own thoughts, and of those thoughts Leonardo tells us nothing at all.

His pictures are in fact not the expression of his own feelings, but the starting-point of ours. Even in the *Last Supper*, he is not dramatic, but scientific. The dreadful words of the Christ "One of you shall betray me" are accompanied only by a gesture of resignation. To Him (and to Leonardo) they are just a statement of fact, needing no emphasis. Yet they sweep like a dividing wave through

the groups of the disciples on either side of Him, so that He is left alone; and the returning wave of question and of protest, quite naturally and with no seemingly conscious effort of design, masses the figures, with their varied gestures and expressions of dismay, into perfectly balanced groups, so that in spite of the spiritual turmoil that it represents, the great composition is left unalterably calm: and the one figure that is as immovable in form as that of the Betrayed is the figure of the betrayer. No little detail that could fix the scene upon our memory, down to the spilt salt and the folds in the table-cloth, has been omitted by this passionless student of men's hearts and minds; and that is why this picture is to most of us the only picture of the *Last Supper*, because Leonardo has not tried to show us what we ought to feel at such a moment, but has set before us that moment in so unforgettable a form that we are bound to feel it for ourselves; He suggests everything and explains nothing, in this picture as in the *Mona Lisa*. Every picture that he ever painted puts a question in our minds. Before *Mona Lisa*, we ask, "Why does she smile, and what are the thoughts behind her eyes?"; and before the *Last Supper*—"Is it I?"

To Leonardo, painting was a means of experiment, no less in the art itself than in its effect upon men's minds; the *Last Supper* is ruined by the experiment that he tried, of painting upon plaster with oil; and the *Mona Lisa* is an experiment in painting that which no painter had ever thought of trying to paint before, namely, movement. *Mona Lisa*'s smile flickers; and that is because Leonardo anticipated by four hundred years the principle of the cinematograph, and multiplied the shadows at the corners of her mouth, so that the eye, moving from one shadow to another, can never be sure of the exact position of the lips; it may be that that is why he took six years to complete the picture, and perhaps painted it more than once before he was satisfied.

There could be no more complete contrast between two men than that between Leonardo and Michelangelo Buonarroti (1474-1564). Leonardo was calm almost to

inhumanity, Michelangelo was emotional to the point of furious impatience. Leonardo was guided by intellect, Michelangelo was driven by inspiration; and though Michelangelo was sculptor, architect, painter, and poet, he always felt that both his art and his opportunity fell short of what he had to express, while Leonardo only sought to arouse emotion in others, not to express any emotion of his own at all. To realize the difference between the two men we have only to consider side by side two drawings in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford, the one (60) by Leonardo, a study of a head from the cartoon for his lost picture of the Battle of Anghiari (1504-5), and the other by Michelangelo (32), a study of the head of a woman in a turban (about 1511). The former represents by careful analysis and detailed drawing of the distortion of the features, the intense fury of a man in battle; the other face is almost without expression, with downcast eyes and mouth in repose; but while Leonardo has simply recorded what passion looks like, Michelangelo has put into his work his own passionate nature, so that while we cannot imagine the face drawn by Leonardo as ever wearing any other expression than that which he has given it, we can imagine the woman of Michelangelo's drawing, in laughter or in tears.

The greater part of Michelangelo's long life was occupied by the art of sculpture, and it was as a sculptor that he first made a name that was famous throughout Italy, and brought him into the service of Pope Julius II; and it was in Rome, not in Florence, that his greatest work as a painter was done. Yet in his sculpture and his painting is the quality of an art which includes and governs both, the art of architecture, and it is only the architectural grandeur, the sense of massive constructional balance, of Michelangelo, that keeps his gigantic energy within the bounds of artistic harmony. His youthful work, the statue of David, in the Bargello at Florence, is a column come to life; his "Moses" made for the tomb of Julius II, that never was finished, is a pyramid in human form; and the four figures of the Day and Night, and Dawn and Twilight, that recline above the doorways of the chapel of the Medici at San

Lorenzo, and the great statues of Lorenzo and Giuliano de' Medici, in their niches, for all the intensity of their human feeling, their indescribable unquietude and melancholy, sink into their places as part of the building, whose architectural forms are but the body of which they are the soul.

This sense of structural design is plainly expressed in the tondo of the **Holy Family* in the Uffizi. We need but contrast the pyramidal compactness of the grouping of the figures of Our Lady and the Child and St. Joseph, and the marvellous way in which our eyes are led upward by the lines of the Blessed Virgin's attitude and drapery to the triumphant figure of the uplifted Child, with the delicate echo of the enclosing circle to be found in the sweeping lines of the robe about Our Lady's knees; and, to complete the unity of the whole, the hard straight line of masonry across the middle distance, and the slight and rather angular upright nude figures in the background, serve to stiffen the design, and to emphasize the simplicity of the scheme of a triangle within a circle upon which it is composed. As is natural in a painter who is thinking in terms of sculpture all the time, his forms are massive, yet full of delicate modelling, and are boldly set out in contrasts of light and shade, while his colours, though pure and strong, have little gradation or subtlety. Indeed, in his greatest work of painting, the vault of the Sistine Chapel in Rome, which he painted for the Pope, under protest, declaring that he was not a painter but a sculptor, colour plays a very secondary part, and the whole scheme of the decoration is that of an elaborate architectural construction, leaving only a row of comparatively small panels down the centre of the vault for paintings representing the Creation, the Fall and the Redemption of man. Though the surface upon which this gigantic fresco is painted is a plain unbroken barrel vault, it has been painted so as to present from below the appearance of a magnificent series of vaulted cells rising to a noble cornice, with every spandril enclosing a majestic figure, the Sibyls and the Prophets, which are hard to distinguish from sculpture. We are reminded of the simpler efforts of Andrea

del Castagno and Paolo Uccello to produce in painting the appearance of sculptural solidity ; and indeed, for all his tremendous genius, Michelangelo was a true descendant from and a faithful adherent to the tradition of the realists who came before him.

Nothing could be bolder or more sweeping than the simple lines of the general design of the figure of the prophet Isaias, bowed in mystical contemplation ; nothing could surpass the decorative completeness with which the figure fills its allotted space ; and so true is the perspective, and so perfectly do the shadows reproduce the tone of nature, that it is hard to realize from any reproduction that both the architectural setting and the figure itself are but paint upon a plain surface of plaster. Every figure in the huge design has this same fitness, combined with absolute freedom of movement, and to every one of them belong a dignity and a finality that make them seem almost structurally essential to the architectural design of which they are but the adornment.

In the panels themselves, there is, naturally, less architectural feeling ; yet even here, each figure is majestic beyond humanity. The *Birth of Adam*, in which the reclining figure of Adam seems to awake at the touch of the finger of the Creator, as though his supple, splendid body thrilled as the soul flowed into it from that miraculous contact, is a design that sweeps across its oblong space in splendid flowing curves that are not constrained by any architectural necessity of stillness ; and in the picture of *The Fall*, the central tree of the knowledge of Good and Evil divides the panel into two portions, of which that on the left, depicting the moment when Eve stretches out her hand to the forbidden fruit, is designed in rich curving lines and with soft rounded forms, while, on the other side, where the angel drives forth from Eden the fallen pair, stark emptiness and rigid figures produce an impression of desolation and despair.

Michelangelo's self-portrait in the Capitoline Museum at Rome shows us just such a face as we should expect to be that of the creator of these massive figures and these

records of deep emotion. The eyes are troubled and the face is worn ; and beneath the moustache and beard it is yet possible to see the lines of the sensitive mouth of a man who felt deeply and wore himself out in the constant endeavour to make his art keep pace with his inspiration. Though he worked often at furious speed, Michelangelo, largely owing to the caprice of his patrons, left many works unfinished ; and his was a lonely life, for he was impatient of the narrow limitations of his fellow-artists. It is said that when he all but refused the task of painting the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, the Pope gave him certain other famous painters to collaborate with him, and so lighten his labours, but that, having heard them argue this way and that as to how the thing should be done, he lost his temper, thrust them out of the chapel and locked the door upon them, and would let no other hand but his own touch the work from the beginning to the end. As he grew old, so he grew in outward manner savage and cynical, intolerant of the pretensions of lesser men ; but neither in his work nor in his life did he lose the nobility, the grandeur and the purity of aim with which he had begun. Of all the Florentines, he had the greatest heart, the widest human sympathy, the noblest conception of the divine fire in the soul of man.

It was impossible that even the most devoted followers of the pure painting tradition of Florence, of the schools of Botticelli and Cosimo Rosselli, should escape the influence of such gigantic contemporaries as Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo ; and upon those painters of whom we have already spoken, Albertinelli and Fra Bartolommeo, their influence was strong, more especially that of Leonardo da Vinci, whose work, in spite of his absence in Milan, Bartolommeo was able to study ; and the association between him and Albertinelli is so close, that what influenced the one was bound to influence the other.

Bartolommeo, or Baccio della Porta (1475-1517), and Mariotto Albertinelli (1474-1515) were both pupils of Cosimo Rosselli, and of Piero di Cosimo. In that school, both learned the use of the oil medium, which the experi-

ments of Leonardo da Vinci had finally established in Florence in use at least as general as that of tempera, for painting upon panel; and it was about this time that the practice of painting upon canvas spread, probably from Venice, to the whole of Italy.

Leonardo's influence is seen, in the *Last Judgment* of Bartolommeo, at S. M. Nuova in Florence, in the careful, quiet rendering of emotional expression, and in the great attention that he gives to the delicate half-tones of light and sky, and to the spacing of his figures. This was painted in 1499, after Bartolommeo, under the influence of Savonarola, had destroyed all the classical studies that he had made with Piero de Cosimo, and had to turn to some new source of guidance in his work: and in this picture he was helped by Albertinelli, who filled in the figures in the lower part. It was not long after that Bartolommeo joined the Dominican order, and for a time gave up painting: but the persuasions of his friend Albertinelli and the desire of the Dominicans that he should use his gifts for the benefit of the order soon brought him back to his work; and now he came into touch with the work of the great Umbrian painters, Perugino and the young Raphael, to the history of whose school we shall presently turn, and from the former learned to temper the quiet dignity of his figures with a greater freedom of movement and grace of drapery. Also, he made journeys to Venice and later to Rome, and saw the work of Bellini and Giorgione, and of Titian at the beginning of his career, and that of Michelangelo in his full strength; and from all of them he learned to add to his own art, and so increased the reputation of the convent of Sammarco, that there was more work than he could do, and he was allowed to take Albertinelli into partnership.

After his visit to Venice he worked mostly in oil upon canvas, a method probably started in Venice for reasons which we shall discuss later. In the Cathedral at Lucca there is a lovely picture by him of the *Madonna enthroned with the Child, with SS. John Baptist and Stephen*, in which there is greater depth and softness of colour, more effective handling of light and shadow, and more lively feeling, than

in almost any Florentine picture before its time ; and in it, the architectural setting, against the dark pillars of which the two saints stand out strongly in full light, is used, in Umbrian fashion, as a framework, rather than a background, of the central group.

At the Dominican hospital Pian' di Mugnone, however, where he frequently went for his health, he painted in fresco, and, in 1514, we see the influence of Michelangelo coming into his work there, in a greater grandeur of forms and solidity of modelling ; yet this influence is strongly combined with that of Raphael, which increased the sweetness and liveliness of expression, and the flowing character of the design of his work.

In the work of Albertinelli, who, moving freely in the outer world, came into closer contact with painters from far and near than Fra Bartolommeo in his convent, the Umbrian influence is very strong. It may be seen very clearly in the way in which the figures of Our Lady and St. Elizabeth are set against the clear distant sky within the framework of the arched portico in **The Salutation* (Uffizi), and in the same picture, the suggestion of cross-reflected colour between the blue and brown-gold robes is very like that which so often find in the work of Raphael. But the shadow which falls across the face of St. Elizabeth, and the minute drawing and accurate rendering of the wrinkled hand, are purely Florentine ; and in the type of the faces we are reminded of Leonardo rather than of Perugino or of Raphael. Besides, the two women are really greeting one another ; there is no hint of that consciousness of playing a part in a picture that so often creeps into the figures in an Umbrian painting of those later days, though we may find it in Albertinelli's lovely *Crucifixion* at the Certosa di Val d'Ema, near Florence.

Albertinelli died in 1515, and Bartolommeo, who had been with him when he died, survived him only by two years. These two, who learned together, and worked together, were both but young, 41 and 42, when they died so little apart from one another ; but in their work they combined the ideals of the two great groups of Florentine

painters, and added to the idealism of the one and the realism of the other, the decorative grace of the art of Umbria; there was little more that Florence could add to the history of art in Italy, and that last contribution was made by Andrea del Sarto (1487-1531), like them a pupil of Piero di Cosimo. Andrea, who as his name implies, was the son of a tailor, was apprenticed at the age of seven to a goldsmith, but showed no aptitude for the craft, while his natural skill in drawing soon led to his transfer to the studio of one Gian Barile, and thence, when he was eleven years old, to the tuition of Piero di Cosimo. Piero, while using his services as an apprentice, allowed him plenty of time to study the cartoons of Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci; and he and Franciabigio (1475-1517), who was a pupil of Mariotto Albertinelli, were both noticed as young men of promise by the Brotherhood of the Servi, who were on the look-out for young painters to complete the decoration of their convent at a cost within their limited means. The frescoes of the life of St. Philip which Andrea painted for them established his reputation, and by 1510 he was already a complete master of fresco painting. His touch is light and broad and free, his figures are graceful, yet dignified, and his composition, while never crowded, fills its space with perfect decorative effect; and in the next two years he showed that he was equally master of the oil medium: but as time went on, his very ease and freedom became a danger, for there crept into his work a kind of showy fluency which is only saved from vulgarity by perfect craftsmanship; still it cannot be denied that Andrea was very sensitive to the spirit of his subject, and could vary his handling both of colour and composition to suit his theme, in wonderfully sympathetic fashion. Indeed, though he never reached the great spiritual heights of Michelangelo, nor the deep understanding of human nature of Leonardo da Vinci, there is in all his work an intimate and human interest which makes it very charming. The people whom he paints are seldom noble, but they are very real; and nothing could be more lively in its expression, delicate in colour, and free in composition, than the last

of his frescoes at the convent of the Servi, that of the **Nativity of the Virgin*, which was finished, as the date on the mantelpiece in the picture tells us, in 1514, the year after his marriage to Lucretia del Fede, whose squarely built and richly modelled figure appears from this date onwards frequently in his pictures. It is in wonderful contrast with the *Disputa* (Discussion of the Doctrine of the Trinity) (Pitti, Florence) painted in 1517 for the monastery of St. Gallo, which is quiet in colour, and sternly simple in its composition; and it was in the same year that he painted the lovely **Madonna dell' Arpie* (the Madonna enthroned with the Child, SS. Francis and John the Evangelist and two angels), now in Uffizi, which shows plainly the influence of Fra Bartolommeo in its free and confident dignity of design, but has a sweetness that is all Andrea's own.

It was in 1518 that he went to France at the invitation of Francis I, and the *Charity* now in the Louvre, which was painted for that King, shows the versatility of the painter, for in this life-sized oil-painting it is Michelangelo who has inspired him to a more massive handling both of composition and of light and shade; and both before and after his stay in France he shows in one work or another the influence of Raphael in design, of the drawings of Albrecht Dürer in the crispness and movement of drapery, and of Leonardo da Vinci in quietude of composition. He was almost too clever to be true to himself. As a man, he lacked sense of responsibility, for, having been entrusted by Francis I with a large sum of money for the purpose of buying works of art, he returned to Florence, bought a house with the money, and thereafter never dared to go back to France; and as a painter, he could use the methods of almost any painter who caught his fickle imagination, and yet could seldom rise above a rather commonplace realism in the rendering of his model. This is well seen in the magnificent colour, design, drawing, and modelling of his **St. John the Baptist* (Pitti), painted in 1523, and originally intended as a peace-offering to the King of France; it is a glorious work of art, almost spoiled by the coarsely handsome features of the model, who might just as well be a street-boy

as a saint. There is, in fact, a streak of vulgarity in Andrea del Sarto; and though he earned by the sheer facility of his command of the craft of painting his name of the "faultless painter," it is only when (as in the *Madonna del Sacco* of 1525, a lunette in fresco in the cloisters of the Servi), he relied wholly upon balance of design, purity of drawing, freshness of colour and strength of modelling, that we are able to throw off our sense of disappointment that so lovely an art as his should have had so little of nobility or of divinity to express; and when we realize the fatal ease with which he could echo the manner of this and that and the other of his great contemporaries, though he had so much less than any of them to say, we shall not be at all surprised to find that the painters who came after him in Florence were more concerned to be clever painters than to have anything serious to express by means of their art.

In one respect, however, he surpassed all Florentines before him, and that was in the instantaneous charm of his portraits. Ghirlandajo may have been deeper in his sympathetic insight, and Leonardo in his analysis of character; but there is no doubt of Andrea del Sarto's power of putting before us a haunting image of a human being, that leaves an impression on our memories as though a stranger, passing in a crowd, had looked at us, and made us want to know him. The *Portrait of a Sculptor* in oil, in the National Gallery, London, with its misty grey tone, the living eyes and sensitive mouth, is such a portrait, and in it Andrea is at his best, for he has no need to try to lift his imagination above its natural level, by aiming at a greatness that he did not possess.

Here we must end our story of the Florentine painters; for, though Bronzino (1502-1572) carried on the art of portrait painting with a kind of heavy vigour which is wonderfully convincing, and at times shows a power in the handling of sombre colour and forceful drawing that takes us back to Leonardo, he does not take us forward at all. His art is all echoes of the past; and, with Florence fallen from the power that had been hers in the great days of Lorenzo the Magnificent, the later years of the 16th

century offered the Florentines nothing to help them to look forward to the future ; and so the inspiration of her painters died, and all they could do was to imitate the manner of great men of the past, without understanding the motives that had made them strive to reach perfection. The only offshoot of importance from the Florentine School was that of the Milanese followers of Leonardo da Vinci, of whom we need only refer here to Luini (1470-1533) and Ambrogio di Predis (1459-1537). The latter was very closely associated with Leonardo, and has actually been supposed by some to have painted the version of the *Madonna of the Rocks* now in the National Gallery, London. He was a portrait painter of great charm and simplicity, and in this aspect of his art shows little affinity to his master : but it is not certain that the portrait of **Beatrice d'Este*, long attributed to him, is actually his work. Indeed, he is rather a shadowy figure, and but for the reputation that he has so long enjoyed as the greatest pupil of Leonardo, he could hardly find a place in so rapid a summary as this book.

The case of Luini is different. Born at Luino on Lake Como, he was a northerner in his instinct for richly blended colour and tender sentiment, and an Italian in his mastery of fresco and large decorative design. The type of his Madonnas, with the long narrow chin, sensitive mouth and heavy eyelids, is a close imitation of the type created by Leonardo, but lacks its mystery of expression, being full of gentle sweetness. In his *Adoration of the Magi* at Saranno and his **Holy Family* in the Liechtenstein Collection at Vienna, all these qualities are well illustrated, and his **Burial of St. Catherine* in the Brera at Milan shows in addition his great power of light and free yet dignified design and fresh but restrained colour. His frescoes in the Cathedral at Saranno are no less happy in their combination of dignity and charm, and though Luini cannot be reckoned among the greatest of Italian painters, he is certainly the most notable and the most strongly individual of the Milanese School.

In the foregoing account of the development of Florentine painting reference has frequently been made to the

painters of the Umbrian School, and it is very necessary that the history of the painters of the cities of Umbria, and especially those of Perugia, should be traced from its beginning in the 14th century, in order that we may understand the full weight of their influence upon Italian painting as a whole.

Gentile da Fabriano (1360-1428) was in a sense the founder of the Umbrian School. He derived his first training either directly or indirectly from Siena, and all his work has the Sienese characteristics of lively colour, minute detail, and human interest, but he has far more than this—an inexhaustible happiness, and a precision of draughtsmanship and balance in design derived from contact with Florence. He had some influence upon Fra Angelico, and in return was to some extent influenced by him: and, whether in Florence, in Venice, or in Rome, he seems to have had the gift of impressing upon others the gaiety and charm that we see in his lovely, crowded but orderly, glittering but stately **Adoration of the Magi* at Berlin.

He created a tradition, but left no successor, and it was not till Benozzo Gozzoli came to Perugia more than twenty years after the death of Gentile, that Umbrian art made any further progress. Then, Benedetto Bonfigli (1425-1496), studying under Gozzoli, produced works which, in design, were closely modelled upon those of the idealist School of Florence, but showed greater intensity of feeling, and a stronger sense of the unity of colour. The **Vision of S. Bernardo* at Perugia, with its strange mingling of the symbolic, and illustrative or descriptive styles, has a very beautiful undertone of silver running through all its variety of colour, the beginning of that feeling for space which becomes in time the outstanding characteristic of the school.

Niccolò da Foligno (1430-1502), who was also a pupil of Gozzoli, departed very far from the standpoint of his master, from whom he learned no more than the craft of painting: for his work is full of an almost painfully intense emotional feeling, and his colour is strong rather than gay.

In all his pictures we feel a certain violence which would be unpleasing if it were not so manifestly sincere.

Another Perugian who was deeply indebted to Florence was Fiorenzo di Lorenzo (1440-1521), for, from having founded his art on that of Benozzo Gozzoli, he turned from the idealist to the realist side of Florentine art, by studying under Antonio Pollaiuolo, and also under Luca Signorelli, and learned from the one his force of draughtsmanship and from the other the elements of the great innovation, composition in space, at which, as we have seen, Masaccio had aimed long before, but which it was reserved for Piero della Francesca (1416?-1492) to develop into a real enlargement of the scope of the painter's art.

Piero della Francesca was not a native of any Umbrian city, but of southern Tuscany, and his training was Florentine, for he learned perspective from Paolo Uccello, and the study of the human form and features from Domenico Veneziano, and was strongly influenced in his rendering of the solidity of forms by the work of Donatello. Indeed, he was so much a seeker after knowledge, and of so scientific a turn of mind, that he could scarcely avoid learning from all with whom he came into contact. He was an advanced mathematician, and a great theologian: and to a man of such a turn of mind, the theory of art would be almost as attractive as the practice of it.

Now, though perspective as practised by Uccello was well enough as a means of representing solid forms at various distances from one another and from the spectator, it did not give them room to move about, and so did not satisfy Piero della Francesca. Therefore he set to work to discover some means of suggesting depth of space upon the flat panel: and, knowing nothing of atmosphere, or of the graduation of colour because of its presence, he had to depend wholly upon composition and design to achieve his purpose. To put it very roughly, he began by drawing a globe in perspective, and then fitted his whole composition into the diagram. His **Baptism in Jordan*, in the National Gallery, London, is a perfect example. The level line of the middle distance is the diameter of the globe. The line from

the feet of the angels on the left, through those of the Christ to those of St. John, is a faintly rising curve, and so is that which runs over the heads of the same figures. The background of hills is made up of curving lines that sink above the diameter or rise beneath it: and by these mechanical means the painter has suggested the existence of an empty space between the foreground figures and the distant hills. The clear, silvery tone of the colour helps us to take in the whole picture, empty space and all, at one glance; and so, by these crude means, Piero began the movement towards what has been called "space-composition," that is, the inclusion of space and distance in the design of a picture, as though it were not a flat surface at all, but possessed actual depth, in which the near and distant objects stand in a decorative relation to one another.

Luca Signorelli (1441-1523) and Melozzo da Forlì (1438-1494), his pupils, carried his work further, the former by more forcible rendering of solid forms, and bolder experiment in the same use of compositional curves, and the latter (perhaps because of his close association with a northern painter, Justus of Ghent) by freer use of the graduation of colour. Signorelli's massive forms and harsh modelling are in strong contrast with the cold tints of Piero, and he may have owed something in this respect to Ghirlandajo; but his frescoes at Orvieto show very plainly (especially the *Last Judgment*) the influence of Piero in the grouping, which is so devised as to give room to the eye to penetrate beyond the first plane of the picture to the middle distance: and though in the work of Melozzo da Forlì it is not easy to trace the working of Piero's principle, the result is plainly there in any composition into which space enters at all.

By their employment in Perugia and in other cities of Umbria, these painters not only influenced Umbrian painting profoundly, but also found, in the soft silvery and golden light of the Umbrian hills, ideal conditions for the study of space as a part of picture composition: and when the native Perugian pupils of Fiorenzo di Lorenzo, Pintoricchio (1454-1513) and Perugino (1446-1523), came to their maturity, they were fully equipped, and naturally

endowed, to use to the full the principles that no Umbrian would ever have discovered for himself, but that no one in Italy but an Umbrian was fully competent to use.

For the Umbrian loved to tell a story in living fashion, and to do this he must have space not only from side to side, but from near to far as well. When Pintoricchio painted the frescoes in the Borgia apartments in the Vatican, and, in 1482, the story of Moses in the Sistine Chapel, he was able to fill with figures, in themselves charming, lively and graceful, space that he had actually created beyond the walls themselves, space invisible filled with clear air ; and when, at the end of his career, he decorated the Library of the Cathedral at Siena with the life-story of Æneas Silvius, diplomat, traveller, poet, and pope (Pius II), though his figures have lost their charm, and are rather clumsily packed together in some of the scenes, each great panel, towering high above the figures in its lower part, is like a window into the open air beyond the walls, with gay, romantic scenery stretching out into the distance. Indeed, the carelessness of his later figure drawing is not mere incompetence, but simply a kind of avowal that the people do not matter nearly so much as the bright world that he has created for them to live in.

Perugino never went so far in the disregard of solidity in his figures : but on the other hand he went far further in the achievement of the painting of space : so much so, that in many of his works the figures are scarcely more than an excuse for painting the space in which they stand. They are simply a starting-point for our excursion to the distant hills and the softly glowing sky. How beautiful is the rosy emptiness behind the dandified and most un-archangelic figure of St. Michael in the triptych in the National Gallery*, London (N.G. 288). How empty is the grace of the kneeling Virgin in the centre panel. It is easy to understand why Perugino allowed himself to repeat figures in one picture after another with a minimum of variation, exactly as earlier painters had used stock backgrounds. Yet his whole object is decorative illustration, not the illusion of reality. The grace of his trees is as formal and unreal as the grace of his

figures, and he repeated his landscapes as unscrupulously as he repeated his saints. If they were beautiful once—as he said to a reproachful patron—they were equally beautiful a second time.

Indeed, the greatest Umbrian of them all, Raffaele Sanzio (1483–1521) was a decorator from beginning to end. Though we may stand entranced before the unearthly beauty of the **Granduca Madonna*, uplifted before the grave sweetness of the **Madonna di San Sisto*, or charmed by the lively grace of the **Madonna del Cardellino*, it is in the monumental *design*, the complete unity between the foreground figure and the landscape background of the *Belle Jardinière* that we see the true purpose of the artist, which is, to create a space and then to fill it perfectly. The **Ansidei Madonna* (N.G. 1171) is a design enclosed within a sweeping oval, so arbitrarily that the right knee of St. John the Baptist is deliberately distorted so as not to break the curve; and the figure of the Madonna towers high before the tall narrow canopy of the throne in order that the fullest decorative value may be given to the distant sky seen beneath the arch. The great decorations of the Stanze of the Vatican are decorations first and subjects only secondly; and they justify the painter in his devotion to pure beauty, perfect rhythm of movement, perfect coherence of design, in which both forms and spaces must play their part in harmony with one another, and emotions must be reduced to graceful formulæ, lest the mind distract the eye from its enjoyment of beauty for beauty's sake.

For this reason, the portraiture of Raphael is often disappointing, though his natural grace is always apparent in it: for insistence upon personality was actually contrary to his aims. In his short and crowded life, the painter, whose personal charm and beauty almost equalled the charm and beauty of his work, necessarily left much of the actual execution of his designs to pupils and assistants, of whom Giulio Romano was the worthiest; and here, the impersonality of his art stood him in good stead. But when he died, mourned by all Rome and all Italy, he had carried pure decoration to its very summit, and for abiding, unruffled



RAPHAEL
St. George and the Dragon
(Umbrian)

beauty there has been no painting since that can compare with his achievement.

VENICE

The history of painting in Florence and Siena, in Umbria and Lombardy, in Padua, Bologna and Ferrara, in Rome and Naples, is Italian history. In all these schools, the genius of painting is the genius of a Latin race; but Venice, from the very first, looks out upon a wider horizon, and draws her inspiration from a larger world. She is not Latin so much as European, and her ideals were not those of the little city state, cramped within narrow borders, jealous of its neighbours without and torn with petty factions and rival ambitions within, but the ideals of empire, gained by adventure of her sons on unknown seas, and made possible by stable government and private security at home.

The reason is plain. Venice was not a city set upon a hill, with walls and towers to be at once a protection from, and a threat to all the country round. Those who founded her had not been warriors challenging the world to war, but refugees hiding from war. The place where Venice stands was wrested, not from covetous enemies by force of arms, but only from the jealous sea, by force of patience. Not blood, but sweat, not fierce rivalry, but untiring unity, had won the victory that set a city where no man had ever stood dryshod till the Venetians came to create Venice in the dreary, lonely lagoon. She grew up, almost secretly, between the Roman Empires of the East and West, hard to find and easy to defend; all her citizens were of necessity masters of watercraft, shipmen from the beginning, and the waters that surrounded their city were their territory. Her westward boundary was the mainland shore, her eastward walls were the long line of sand banks that lie between the lagoon and the open sea, and the Adriatic was her gateway to the world.

So, Venice stood with her back to Italy. She faced the East. Rome, to her, meant nothing; even her church was almost free, her saints and her festivals were her own. Constantinople, sinking slowly to her splendid decay, was

the pattern for her arts, the Turk the only rival of her rising glory.

The blood of the North was in Venetian veins, brought from the Alpine mainland long ago, and with it came the spirit of adventure, no less than the deep and abiding love of home. While the painters of Florence and Siena were building up the painter's art in the 14th century, breaking away slowly and painfully from the Byzantine symbols that had lost all meaning for them, Venice was still content at home with an art that was Byzantine both in its forms and its material, the art of mosaic; but her merchant ships were trading in every port of Greece and Asia Minor, and for her Byzantium was a living city; her war-galleys, with their long scarlet oars, were making the sea-ways safe for her traders, and building up an empire almost by accident in the doing of it; and the Venetian Marco Polo was travelling very far away, in the unknown and almost fabulous land of China, the first European to pass through that forbidden land and to return to tell the wonderful tale of it. In a sense, Marco Polo was the first European in history, the first man who could think in terms, not of cities but of continents, not of factions but of civilizations; and he was a Venetian.

So, Venetians could "think big." And because of this big outlook, they had the dignity which comes of proper pride; they had the geniality, the power for enjoyment, even of quite little things, which comes of a feeling of security and peace at home; they had the love of public display, of pageantry, which comes of civic unity, and the pride of possession, the personal love of beautiful things, which comes of wealth well-earned and safely held; and all these they had without becoming smug or dull, because they had won them, and maintained them, by ceaseless endeavour, adventure in far lands, and an experience of the wider world which no other people in all Europe possessed.

Even the stay-at-home Venetian saw a world that the rest of Italy only knew at second-hand. The Quay of the Slavs—the Riva dei Schiavoni—the trading headquarters

of the Turks and of the Germans—the Fondachi dei Turchi and dei Tedeschi—still bear witness to the presence of traders from near and far. Othello, we may be sure, was not the only African that Venice knew, and when at last Constantinople fell, and with it the last vestige of the old Byzantine Empire was lost to history, it was Venice that first of all European states exchanged ambassadors with the new Turkish capital, and sent a painter to paint the portrait of the Sultan of the conquered city.

It is very necessary to realize how different were the history and outlook of Venice from that of any other city of Italy, for otherwise it would be impossible to grasp the spirit and significance of Venetian painting, that began so late, lived so gloriously, and outlasted so long the art of all the rest of Italy. There was not, before the early 15th century, a single Venetian painter whose work could compare with that of other schools; but from the very day that Venice took to painting in earnest, she made up for all delay in beginning by the speed with which she took her place; and the most remarkable thing of all about her art is, that though her painters gladly and readily learned from anyone who could teach them, they were never, even at the very beginning, imitators either of a painter or of a school. They were always themselves, and always Venetian.

There is one thing about Venetian painting which makes it at once more attractive to English eyes than that of the rest of Italy, and that is the depth and richness of its colour.

While all other schools used colours, the Venetians used colour. I mean this: that while a Florentine painter never loses sight of the fact that colours are different from one another, and so, either makes his picture a pattern or design of blue and red and green and so on,—Benozzo Gozzoli's *Procession of the Kings*, for instance—or else, if he wants to show the beauty of light and shade, subdues his colours to such an extent that his picture is almost a monochrome—as, for example, Leonardo da Vinci's *Madonna of the Rocks*—the Venetian painted colour as he saw it in the actual light of day. His reds and blues and greens are

still red and blue and green, but all these separate colours have in them the tinge of the light itself by which he saw them, and this tinge of gold, or rose, or grey, binds them all together and controls them all. The colour of the light is the "colour" of the picture; and because the light of Venice is infinitely variable, changing with every hour of the day, from pearly grey to silver, from silver to gold and gold to burning rose, and rose to purple on the tired eyelids of the day, to the Venetian colour was an ever-new delight, as it could not be to the painters of mid-Italy, where day is day and night is night, and there's an end on't. So, by race, by history, and by climate the Venetian was marked out to make a new use of painting when at last he began: and it was very largely climate that kept him back so long. In the damp salt air of Venice, a few years sufficed to ruin any fresco painting, while mosaics will stand—and have stood to this day—a thousand years. Tempera was better; but wooden panels will warp and rot, and colours flake from the gesso groundwork, when the air is heavy with moisture at the end of every day; and therefore Venice could not, even if she would, learn a craft of painting that was much use to her, from the painters of the south.

Nevertheless, painting was practised, for the most part on a small scale, in Venice during the 14th century, and, by the middle of the century, there were already many painters in Venice, among whom Antonio Veneziano, who was working in 1368, and Francesco del Fiore, who died in 1398, are worthy of note. The usual form of Venetian work of this period was the "ancona," or altar-piece of several small panels built into a rich architectural setting, rather after the Sienese style: but the recent discovery, in the Sala del Maggior Consiglio in the Palace of the Doges, of a large fresco of the *Paradise*, by Guariento, shows that already before the end of the century large decorative paintings were in demand in Venice: and when, in 1408, the Republic of Venice invited the Umbrian painter Gentile da Fabriano to decorate the Palace with frescoes, Venetian painters found the lead for which they had been waiting, and made rapid progress under his influence.

Jacobello del Fiore, the son of Francesco, who was already painting in 1400, and who died in 1439, was influenced first by Guariento and then, after 1408, by Gentile da Fabriano; but the great forward movement of the Venetian painters towards the evolution of a really Venetian School was made, still under the influence of Gentile da Fabriano, by two separate groups of painters, those of Murano and those of Venice itself.

At Murano, Giovanni d'Alemagna (John of Germany) and Antonio Vivarino, the son of Michele, worked in partnership. The influence of the northern painter can be seen in the tendency towards a softening of the colours and broadening of the shadows, and also perhaps in the more marked rendering of individual character in the faces of the saints, standing singly or in pairs against their backgrounds of gold or red or blue: but that of Gentile da Fabriano is seen in the freedom of the decorative balance and the careful precision of drawing, which are not inborn either in Venetian or German, but had to be learnt from the more practised artist of Umbria.

The School of Murano lasted through the 15th century, mainly in the work of the Vivarini family. Bartolommeo Vivarino (1430-1499), the much younger brother, and pupil, of Antonio, carried on the tradition derived from Gentile da Fabriano, but added to it a still more forcible draughtsmanship, and more massive modelling, learnt from the great Mantegna, of whom we shall have much to say presently; and in splendour of colour, and forceful rendering of character he was not surpassed by the greatest of the Venetians of the day. Nothing could be more magnificent than the glowing colour and powerful modelling of his triptych of *St. Mark enthroned between Four Saints* in the Church of the Frari at Venice, though his triptych of the *Madonna and Child between Four Saints* in the same church shows that in seeking strength he rather missed tenderness. His draperies are superbly drawn, and his figures are compactly grouped, with a solemn dignity that we tend to admire rather than to enjoy.

Alvise Vivarini (1444-1502) was the son of Antonio, and the pupil of his uncle Bartolommeo, and his work

shows the influence of both—the grace of the former and the severity of the latter. His *Santa Chiara* in the Accademia at Venice (593) is an austere dignified figure, and the wrinkled face is like ivory in the setting of the sombre habit, a pale gleam of light falling upon the features from a window suggested in the background; and the *St. Ambrose and Saints* in the Frari is a marvel of variety in attitude and expression, of rich yet subdued colour, and of immense perspective. The painters of Murano, in less than a century of progress, had nothing left to learn of the truths of painting, but they never found the secret of that wonderful joy of life that glows in the work of the painters of Venice. Even at their most magnificent, there is something about them always a little grim.

However, we must return to the beginning of the century to trace the main stream of Venetian painting, to Jacopo Bellini (c. 1398–1470). From whom he first learned painting we do not know, but when Gentile da Fabriano was finishing his work at the Ducal Palace, young Jacopo Bellini watched him constantly and perhaps acted as his assistant, and formed so great an admiration for the master and his style that he followed him to Florence and to Rome, and became his pupil and his friend; and when, in 1428, a son was born to Bellini, Gentile da Fabriano was his godfather and gave him his own name.

Jacopo Bellini never became a great painter, so far as we know; but though little of his work has survived, it seems certain that he had a very sound knowledge of painting, and a delicate sense of colour; he is famous rather through his sons, and because of the fact that through him was brought into Venetian art the tremendous influence of Mantegna and the School of Padua, and that of the happy, lively art of Pisanello.

It is difficult to tell the story of Venetian painting in a straightforward way, because it is derived from such varied sources and in such various ways; and here we must turn aside for a moment to see how the School of Padua, that was the source of half the painting of Northern Italy, came into existence by a kind of accident.

Padua was, and is, a University town, and in this 15th century, when the thoughts of all Italy were being carried on a rising tide in the direction of new thought, of philosophy and literature, and of the glories of the ancient civilizations of Greece and Rome, it was the resort of all the greatest scholars of Europe. When, in 1453, Constantinople fell before the Moslem conqueror, and Greek scholarship was brought to Italy by refugees from the ancient capital of the Greek world, Padua reached the zenith of her glory.

In Padua there dwelt at this time one Squarcione, a tailor with artistic leanings—a poor painter, but enough of a draughtsman to have made a map of Venice for the archives of the Doges, and with enough taste, knowledge, and business instinct to fill his shop with a collection of ancient marble sculptures gathered from far and near, which made it the meeting-place of scholars, doubtless at the price of an occasional order for a suit of clothes. Artists came to copy, and students to study his sculptures, till at length he gave up tailoring for art, and, having painted sufficiently to get admitted to the Gild of Painters in Padua, he set up as a painter in full form, ready to take contracts for the decoration of churches and the like.

It seemed a daring thing to do, but Squarcione, if he was not a genius himself, knew genius when he saw it, and he had set to work to make his collection of antiquities a school of art, and to find pupils and apprentices who should carry out his contracts for him, and to share the direction of their studies with men who were better able to teach them than he was himself.

So, in 1441, he had adopted a nameless orphan boy of scarcely ten years old, nicknamed Mantegna—the Mantuan—from the place of his birth, and had let him loose among the relics of Roman glory, and allowed him to listen to the talk of scholars, till the child was saturated with the worship of ancient Rome. A draughtsman by nature to his fingertips, Mantegna was a master by the time he was fourteen, and all his work is marked by the same clear-cut rendering of form that we associate rather with sculpture than with

painting. Yet his figures, though they are statuesque, are full of a kind of passionate romance ; for all their stillness they are full of life : and though, when he pleased, he could dispense with colour altogether, and paint in monochrome, yet, as a colourist, he has a depth and splendour unlike anything before his time.

For fellow-pupils at the School of Squarcione he had two brothers, Gentile Bellini, three years older, and Giovanni, one year older than himself ; and for a master in the joy of colour, Jacopo Bellini, their father. In draughtsmanship and in design he was the master of all three, as he was also of his fellow-pupil from Ferrara, Cosimo Tura, and through him of the whole School of Ferrara. Indeed, Mantegna's influence was one to which it is difficult to set the limits, for it has come down through the centuries even to the present day. The severity of his drawing saved Venice through the Bellini, Flanders, long after his time, through Rubens, and England later still, through Vandyk, Rubens' pupil, from mere uncontrolled exuberance of colour and slovenliness in the rendering of form.

His wonderful little picture of **St. George*, in the Accademia at Venice, glows with colour, but it is colour completely controlled by form. The saint stands in gleaming black armour, resting easily upon his broken lance, his left hand lightly poised on his hip beside the hilt of his sword, his bare head turned to one side ; and his halo, like a plate of solid gold, is rather quaintly poised on his hair, its shining surface darkened by the reflection of the head on which it rests ! There is often, in the work of Mantegna, a touch of literal, unimaginative simplicity, which shows how devoted he was to truth of form as he actually saw it.

A short red cloak hanging from the shoulders, and the scarlet leather straps of the armour, are the only touches of strong colour about the figure. The dragon, on whose colouring an earlier painter would have let his fancy play, is here a very natural, possible monster in dull lizard-like greens and browns, lying dead, with the broken lance-

point in his throat, behind the feet of the saint ; and beyond, a mountain landscape rises, with a winding road that reaches to a little town set against the sky, behind the shoulder of St. George. The sky itself is golden underneath the blue, with little clouds floating airily across it ; and from the dark marble jambs of the doorway in which the saint stands as in a frame, hangs a great festoon of richly ripened fruit and dark green leaves, a glowing finish to the quiet coolness of the picture as a whole.

His **Madonna of the Rocks*, now in the Uffizi at Florence, has, at one side, a like background of winding road and fields and hills, with tiny figures here and there, but in the centre a fantastic mass of jagged rock, that gives the picture its name, rises to the top of the picture ; before it is set the figure of Our Lady, wonderfully drawn, in a natural attitude, her right foot in its red shoe thrust right forward, while the left knee is drawn up to support the sleeping Child. Her blue robe, above the rose-coloured dress, is drawn, every fold of it, with thoughtful care, to suggest the solidity of the form that it enfolds : and here again, a blue sky, with little drifting clouds, is no mere blue background, but a great space beyond the rocks and mountains, as though Mantegna had felt the need of its emptiness to emphasize the mass and weight of the forms that he has set before it.

This was the man from whom Gentile and Giovanni Bellini learned to draw ; and they, living in the present like good prosperous Venetians, and caring nothing for the ancient world, turned their lesson to account to render the people among whom they lived, and the warm-hearted happy religion, with its touch of human pathos, that was natural to them. While Mantegna, through his life of more than seventy years (he died in 1506), grew more and more devoted to pure sculptural form, and gradually lost the richness of his earlier colouring, they followed their Venetian bent, and went from strength to strength of jewelled colour, never losing, but passing on to their successors, the beauty of ordered drawing and bold design. How close was the association between the Bellini and Mantegna is shown by

the two versions, both now in the National Gallery, London, of the *Agony in the Garden*, the one by Mantegna and the other by Giovanni Bellini. Both are based upon the lines of a design in the sketchbook of Jacopo Bellini, and were plainly done as a school exercise in composition, though Mantegna's picture was painted for the Podestà of Padua; but while Bellini has given all his thought to the rendering of the early light of dawn, Mantegna has spent his efforts upon complicated problems of foreshortening, and upon the symbolic meaning of his accessories. The difference in outlook between them is a foreshowing of their future careers.

The work of Gentile Bellini covers a wide range, and in the favourite Venetian genre of processional and pageant pictures, with their minutely accurate backgrounds of Venice itself, its Piazza of St. Mark, its canals and bridges, he was very successful, as for example in his *Miracle of the True Cross* in the Accademia at Venice (567-568); but it was principally as a portrait painter that he excelled. The National Gallery, London, has two remarkable examples of this branch of his art; the one is a picture of **St. Dominic* (N.G. 1440), in which the Saint is shown half-length, behind a sill or parapet which runs across the foot of the panel. He wears the black skull-cap and habit of his order, and holds in his right hand his emblem the white lily, and a book bound in dull red. The whole background is filled by a green curtain with a woven pattern of flowers in white and red. His face is pale and wrinkled, and its expression dour. The old eyes gaze out wearily, and the thin lips are dragged down at the corners. It is a forbidding face, but intensely alive, and the cool tone of the picture is wonderfully appropriate to the severity of the subject; the other is the portrait of the Sultan Mahomet (N.G. 5099), which Gentile painted at Constantinople on November 25th, 1480, a livelier piece of work, much warmer in colour, but less convincing by far.

Giovanni Bellini, however, was so far the greater artist of the two that he may truly be regarded as the father of Venetian painting. As a painter of the Madonna he is

without rival in sweetness and in simple rendering of a perfectly natural and robustly human type of beauty. His colour has all the rich, jewel-like quality of Bartolommeo Vivarino, without a trace of its occasional coarseness. His drawing is clean-cut and boldly confident, his modelling is soft yet firm, and he comes nearer than any painter before him to the rendering of light in atmosphere. There can be no more gracious, no more reverent, yet no more human representation of *Our Lady and the Child with Saints*, than the glorious triptych in the Frari Church. So wonderful is the rendering of perspective and of light and shade, that the figures seem set deep in recesses within their gorgeous gilded frames. So serene is the Mother, so sturdy is the Child that stands upon her knee, so dainty are the baby angels that stoop and play on lute and pipe at the foot of the throne, so keen is the glance, so firm the standing of the saints on either side, that one comes away with an undying impression of their vitality and their reality. They live, and the world is more beautiful because of them, and faith the stronger.

It has been said that the Venetians were too full of the joy of material things to paint truly religious pictures. I do not believe it. To them, religion, and those whom their religion revered, were so real as to be just part of their everyday life, and they had in them the same joy that they felt in civic splendour, in sunshine and free air, and in human loveliness; and it was so that they painted them. How else could Bellini have painted that **Madonna of the Little Trees* that hangs in the Accademia, with its tiny slip of landscape on either side of the soft green curtain that forms the background for the dark-eyed, olive-skinned Venetian girl with her dark-eyed, golden-headed boy? It is a perfect blending of affection and of reverence: and that other, in the National Gallery, London, the *Madonna of the Pomegranate*, is so like it, and yet so different, with a warm evening light in the sky, that gives a warmer glow to the features, a quieter, less watchful expression to the face. Venetian art is very human, but Giovanni Bellini at least showed how near humanity may come to the divine.

His is the joy and pride of faith, not its sorrow nor its fear.

And in that one surviving portrait certainly by him, the **Doge Leonardo Loredano* (N.G. 189), he has made a face, that is both severe and shrewd, twinkle with human kindness. Wrinkle for wrinkle it is drawn, with the even colour of old parchment, a very living presentment of a man. It glows warmly against the plain white of the Doge's cap, against the rich blue of the turquoise background, and against the shimmer of brocade of white and gold. The face dominates the whole design; and yet it is only because of the wonderful colour-sense of the painter, who set it against the blue, and kept all its immediate surroundings cold in tone, that it has any warmth or kindness at all; and half our pleasure in it comes, though we scarcely guess it, from its beauty as a design and an arrangement of colour, not from its quality as a portrait at all.

Again, in the **Infant Bacchus*, formerly in the R. H. Benson collection, it is the way in which the golden glow of the sky permeates the whole picture, and in which the distant blue of the mountains picks up the dull blue of the child's garment, that makes the charm of what is otherwise a rather unconvincing excursion into classic unreality. Bellini overcomes his lack of interest in Bacchus, by enjoying his opportunity for working out a lovely scheme of natural colour—which is a thing that no Italian had ever done before him.

But this power of finding beauty in the mere appearance of things was common to all Venetians. They lived with their eyes, so to speak, continually observant and omnivorously interested. To Vittore Carpaccio (c. 1450–1522) the turban of a Turk, seen in Constantinople, and the turned slenderness of a bedpost in Venice, were equally interesting, equally worth painting: and because he missed nothing of all the little details of everyday experience, and had a keen and curious memory of all outlandish things, he was a born story-teller. Because his exquisite sense of design found for each thing he saw its natural place in his telling of his story, he was an inspired designer; and this combination

of dramatic realism and decorative instinct is the outstanding characteristic, not only of his work, but of that of all Venetian painters of and after his time. He added to the literal rendering of pageantry and lively incident that he had learnt from his master Gentile Bellini, a grace and a romance that were all his own; and in all his colour, brilliant though it be, there is a silver quietude like that of broadening dawn or silver afternoon.

There is a little room in the Accademia in Venice, in which nine pictures by Carpaccio set out the story of St. Ursula, that strange mixture of romance and martyrdom. In these pictures, with their ships and cities, and their memories of many lands, we may see Carpaccio's enjoyment of his own powers of observation; and in the most famous of them all, the **Vision of St. Ursula*, in which the saint, asleep in her tall slender four-post bed, is visited by an angel with the vision of her coming martyrdom, we see to the full his power of design. It is a wonderful pattern of vertical and horizontal lines, a rectangle within a rectangle, in which the only relieving curves are the arched window-heads and the circular windows above them, and the arched head-panel of the bed itself; and the only non-geometrical elements apart from the angel and the sleeping saint, are the two plants that grow in vases on the window-sill. Yet there is no stiffness, only a very gentle, very dignified air of quietness about it all. Soft golden grey and green are its groundwork, boldly crossed by the horizontal scarlet lines of the coverlet and the valance of the tester, and its atmospheric tone is silvery grey. There is no more peaceful picture in the world than this; and so real is the saint, so real are her surroundings, from the bracket lamp upon the wall to the lap-dog beside her bed-foot, that the angel becomes as real as all the rest; and so we share the secret of the dream, and scarcely dare to stir lest we dispel it.

Lively in spirit, graceful in design and tender in colour always, Carpaccio painted the high adventures of St. George and the story of St. Jerome and his lion in the Church of the Schiavoni, and the lion of St. Mark in the palace of the Doges. He worked in tempera on canvas, and the clear

cool tones of his pigments are scarcely impaired by time : yet the greatest glory of Venetian colour was not his, but that which came to her from the north, with the Flemish secret of painting in oil colour, which was brought to Venice by Antonello da Messina (1444-1493). Though, as his name implies, he was a Sicilian by birth, his earliest training seems to have been gained from some Flemish painter working in Italy, and we know that he had seen and admired the work of the great Jan van Eyck himself, done in Italy during his travels there. He used to be called a pupil of van Eyck, but this cannot be, for he was but a child of seven when van Eyck died ; yet it is undeniable that such pictures as the **Portrait of a Man* (N.G. 1141) and the **Crucifixion* (N.G. 1166) painted in 1477, in realism, intensity of expression, and richness of colour, are far more Flemish than Italian, and his *St. Jerome in his Study* (N.G. 1418), painted probably in Venice about 1475, was for many years attributed to Jan van Eyck. During his stay in Venice he was much influenced both by Gentile Bellini, and by Alvise Vivarini, who, as we have seen, was descended from a line of painters at Murano which included Giovanni d'Alemagna, another northern influence in the formation of the Venetian School.

The whole leaning of the Venetians was in the direction of rich colour, and the great Giovanni Bellini himself was among the first to use the novel oil-medium. Even when he was very old, in 1506, we find him still eagerly inquiring of Albrecht Dürer, who was then in Venice, as to his methods of its use, and this after it had already been known to him and used by him for a quarter of a century. There was a particular and local reason for this Venetian interest in oil-painting, beside that of its greater richness of colour ; for the Venetian climate had already obliged the Venetians to find a substitute for plaster and panel upon which to paint, and to them is due the full evolution of painting upon stretched canvas : for canvas is light and portable, and can be set at a safe distance from the dampness of the wall ; but so long as it had to be coated with gesso, to receive the tempera colours, the gesso was liable to scale and crack

as the canvas sagged or tightened with the variation of humidity and temperature. Oil-colours, flexible and damp-resisting, and needing no plaster ground, were perfect for the purpose of painting upon canvas, and, when the Venetians brought the two together in the latter half of the 15th century, they invented, so to speak, the modern picture, complete in itself within its frame, and movable from place to place. Painting was thus set free from the limitations imposed upon it by its original function of decorating a wall, a ceiling, or an altar, and became an independent art. The "easel picture," as it is called, had come into existence. The immediate result, in a city of prosperous private households, was an enormous multiplication of portraits, and, apart from great religious pictures and allegorical decorations, the great contribution of Venice to Italian painting is the development of portrait-painting from a faithful record of features to a fine art; and it was in Venice too that the fanciful and the sentimental subject picture came into being, with family groups and concert parties and picnic parties, leading by easy stages to almost pure landscape painting, and also to the development of a vivid realism in the rendering of religious and historical subjects.

The followers of the Murano School of the Vivarini were more conservative than the pupils of Bellini. Cima (c. 1460-1517), whose real name was Giambattista da Conegliano, and who was an apprentice of Bartolommeo Montagna, a pupil of Alvise Vivarini, brings into his pictures very beautiful and carefully observed landscape backgrounds such as that of his **Tobias and the Angel* in the Accademia at Venice, but his figures are in front of, rather than in their setting, and are arranged to fill their space decoratively rather than realistically; and his drawing of forms and drapery has a certain delicate precision which we can trace back to the Umbrian influence of Gentile da Fabriano. It was another and earlier member of this group of painters, however, who carried right down to the end of the 15th century the brilliance of minute detail and the careful stiffness of draughtsmanship, combined with

the vivid rendering of types of human character, which belong to the turning-point between the mediæval and the renaissance points of view. This was Carlo Crivelli (c. 1435-c. 1494), a pupil of Antonio Vivarino, but perhaps more deeply indebted to the School of Squarcione—that is, to Mantegna—than to the Muranese master.

Living and painting almost all his life at Ascoli, at a distance from the centre of Venetian progress, and, in character, a queer mixture of ostentation and asceticism, he seems never to have shaken off a kind of awe-struck reverence for drawing for its own sake, learnt from the tremendous example of Mantegna. His own drawing is hard and wiry, and his modelling precise and dry; yet in all his work the vigour of execution and the virile intensity of feeling are as convincing in their sincerity as his love of colour and gold and magnificence of robes and jewels is engaging in its simplicity. In the National Gallery, London, the *Demidoff Altar-piece* (788), with its three tiers, and thirteen panels, displays all these characteristics; and, in the *Annunciation* (N.G. 739), are shown, in addition, his delight in splendid architecture and his keen observation of lively and varied human action.

The main stream of Venetian painting, however, was that which flowed from Bellini, through the greatest of his pupils, Giorgione (1477-1510) and Titian (? 1487-1576). Neither was born in Venice itself, but in Venetian territory on the mainland, the former at Castelfranco, and the latter high among the mountains, at Cadore. Both brought to Venice their love of and sympathy with landscape: and so their pictures are more spacious, and more influenced by atmosphere than any that the painters of Venice had yet produced, with the possible exception of Carpaccio; and even he is left far behind by them in depth and variety of tone. While the works of Titian are legion, the product of a long life of constant and unwearying activity, those of Giorgione are among the rarest in the world: for not only was his life cut short at thirty-three, because, they say, he could not forbear to press a last kiss upon the lips of his lady as she lay dead of the plague, but even while he lived,

much of his genius was wasted upon fresco paintings which scarcely survived him under the Venetian mists; three works are certain, and the rest are the subject of dispute that is likely never to be ended, for his art was the beginning of a new epoch, the opening of a new world, and Titian was but one of many who followed closely in his footsteps.

In the early altar-piece at Castelfranco of **Our Lady enthroned with the Child between SS. George and Liberale*, we can see plainly the spirit of Bellini, rendered with a tenderer romance and greater freedom by his pupil. The figures of the Mother and the sleeping Child are lifted high upon the throne, above the dark red wall that divides the foreground of the picture from the quiet landscape and the distant sea. All the splendour of colour is concentrated in her crimson mantle, and in the rich trappings of the throne. The black armour of St. George gleams soberly, the dark habit of the monk absorbs the soft light that falls upon it. Here are peace and dignity, the contemplative exaltation of the soul, divine contentment.

In the mysterious **Soldier and Gypsy* of the Palazzo Giovannelli at Venice there is this same quality of reserve and quiet, though here the sky is stormy and cold and the distant towers glare against it as against a thundercloud. The woman seated crouching in the foreground, naked save for the end of her white mantle thrown around her shoulders, gleams out strangely from the shadowed grass and trees: and the figure of the soldier leaning on his spear stands in mingled light and shadow on the left, as detached an observer of the scene as ourselves. It is like the picture of a dream, as incomprehensible and as inevitable.

Indeed, one is tempted to say that the true test of Giorgione's work is just this quality of calm finality, that tells but half, and yet leaves nothing to be said; and on this ground I am inclined both to doubt the authenticity of the pretty *Shepherd with a Pipe* at Hampton Court, and to admit that of the *Christ bearing the Cross* in the Church of San Rocco at Venice: but putting all controversy aside, we know enough of Giorgione to say that the spirit of his

work is the spirit of lyrical romance, a thing quite different from Carpaccio's romantic balladry.

It was in the last three years of Giorgione's life that Tiziano Vecelli of Cadore came closely into contact with him. If it be true that Titian was born in 1477, and at the age of ten was apprenticed to a mosaic worker in Venice, named Zuccato, it may also be that he was a pupil of Giovanni Bellini side by side with Giorgione. At any rate it is certain that, with Giorgione, he decorated the Fondaco dei Tedeschi with frescoes which have long since perished, and that he must have been in daily contact with him from 1507 to 1510. After Giorgione's death he moved to Padua for a while, and painted some frescoes, which survive: but at least down to 1508 his style is rather more akin to that of Giovanni Bellini than to that of Giorgione. The early **Madonna of the Cherries* in the Imperial Gallery, Vienna, is freer in drawing, livelier in action, and more golden in tone than any work of Bellini, but the general resemblance is unmistakable, while in this, as in the **Tribute Money* at Dresden, we find none of the reticence of Giorgione. But in the early **Sacred and Profane Love* (Rome, Borghese) we have a bold advance on Giorgione himself, and in the *Concert* in the Uffizi (if indeed this be not the work of Giorgione) Titian is not merely learning from, but actually imitating his friend. It was not long, however, before he had built up, on the foundation so formed, his own triumphant art, of a romance so full of vitality and of the joy of life, of power over colour, and of wealth of varied form, as to have no further use, save in flashes here and there, for Giorgione's sense of mystery. In 1518 he painted that mounting glory of movement, uplifted on the whirlwind of its own enthusiasm, the *Assumption of the Virgin*, which is now restored to its rightful place above the High Altar of the Church of the Frari; and for the same church in 1526 the *Madonna of the Pesaro Family*, exuberant yet tender, glowing and yet serene. In 1523, he touched the summit of achievement in the mastery of orchestrated colour, so to speak, in the **Bacchus and Ariadne* of the National Gallery, London (N.G. 35), perfect



TITIAN
Portrait of a Man
(*Venetian*)

in its balance of sombre foliage against the glowing tints of Bacchus and his flying mantle, poised against the blue.

Yet years later, in 1548, the note of gravity recurs in his splendid equestrian portrait of *Charles V at Mühlberg* (Prado), the very embodiment of a conqueror, alone and friendless above a vanquished world: indeed, Titian as a portrait-painter seems haunted by a sadness that scarcely touched him when his theme was religion or romance. His **Portrait of a Man with Leopard-skin Collar* in the Frick collection in New York, another early work, the *Ariosto* (N.G. 1944), the late portrait of himself at Berlin, and even a portrait forming part of a great decorative design, such as the *Doge Grimani kneeling before the Faith* (1555) in the Doges' Palace, are all pervaded by an air of gentle melancholy that we seldom find in his religious and mythological subjects.

It was a personal trait, and no mere trick of style, for in the portrait painters of Brescia and Bergamo, who owed all to Venice and almost all to Titian, there is no trace of it. Theirs is a simple unimaginative dignity, enhanced in Moretto da Brescia (Alessandro Bonvicino, 1498-1555) by sumptuous design and rich though sober colour, and, in his religious subjects, rendered almost austere by the clear silvery tone which envelops his work, as in the *S. Bernardino* in the National Gallery, London. Giambattista Moroni (1520-1578), of Bergamo, whose portraiture Titian esteemed as equal to his own, is colder still in tone and very grave, but never sad. His portraits, of which there is a fine group in the National Gallery, London, reveal a mastery of quiet tones and of the rendering of character that sets him in a category of his own.

Giorgione had set a fashion, but only Titian carried his work forward from the point where he had left it. Vincenzo Catena (? -1531) exquisitely shared the spirit of Giorgione, but added little to it of his own. Yet there is a real sweetness in his *Warrior adoring the Infant Christ* (N.G. 234), and very great peace and simplicity—more akin to Carpaccio than to Giorgione—in his **St. Jerome in his Study* (N.G. 694).

Titian and Titian alone carried painting forward, widening its scope of expression, enlarging its range of subject, and, above all, making the landscape setting of his figures an integral part of his design, and giving to his rendering of light its natural and proper function of determining the dominant tone of all his rich and varied colour. In this, he constitutes the link between Italy and the north-western world of painting, and it is through him that northern painters and the painters of Spain have learnt to draw upon the wealth of Italian wisdom in the art of painting; for, without this link of a common love of colour as a part of light, we should never have been able to appreciate the importance of classic drawing and design.

Yet even Titian lacked force of draughtsmanship in some degree. Michelangelo, speaking of the Venetian painters in the hey-day of Titian's young glory, deplored that drawing was lacking to them, for otherwise there would be no heights to which they could not attain; and it was reserved for Tintoretto—the "little dyer" as Jacopo Robusti (1518–1594) was nicknamed from his father's trade—to show that light and colour and form could all be rendered in a single painting with equal force and truth. He was apprenticed to Titian, but probably worked with Bonifazio Veronese, who had been pupil and assistant to Palma Vecchio (*c.* 1480–1528). Palma (properly Giacomo Negretti) was allied, through Cima, with whom he studied, to the School of Murano; he inherited from it a statuesque character in the drawing of drapery, and a depth of colour, which, combined with the warm humanity of Giovanni Bellini, from whom he learned much, and with some of Giorgione's tenderness of sentiment, gave to his work the strength and dignity which are so apparent in his **St. Barbara* over the altar of S. Maria Formosa in Venice. Tintoretto's artistic descent was therefore of a kind to free him to a great extent from the necessity of imitating Titian, and from the first he asserted his power to choose in what respect he would follow his master, for he inscribed as a motto over his studio door "The colour of Titian, and the drawing of Michelangelo."

The keynote of his work is imaginative realism, and the outstanding characteristic of it is his mastery of the rendering of light and shadow so as to give vigour and movement to the human form. His sense of design must have been instinctive, for, however vast the scale upon which he worked, and however full of varied, dramatic, and individual action his compositions, he never fails to produce an instantaneous impression of unity and coherence. He worked at tremendous speed, as his nickname "Il furioso" implies, and no feat of foreshortening, no interplay of lights, no complication of grouping was too bold for him to attempt, nor indeed, too difficult for him to achieve. His colour, though more sombre than that of Titian, is still rich and varied, and bears more relation to nature than that of any artist before him whose aim was decorative effect. Sometimes, as in his *Paradiso*, the largest canvas in the world, in the Sala del Maggior Consiglio in the Doges' Palace, he was obliged, in order to avoid wearying the eye by breaking up his picture into patches of different colours, to subdue colour almost to monochrome, and to rely upon masses of dark and light for the balance of his design: but in his smaller works, such as the **Bacchus and Ariadne*, also in the Doges' Palace, he has an exquisitely delicate range of flesh tones and a great mastery of varied colour.

There is an idealistic majesty in the proportions of his human forms, but they never depart from a natural probability, and, in many of his pictures, there is a marvellous blending of the sublime and the commonplace, which does not bring down the subject to the commonplace level, but raises the commonplace to share in the sublimity of the subject. An example of this is in the *Crucifixion* in the Accademia at Venice, where, under the glaring yet darkened sky against which the cross stands out with awful emphasis, folk go about their daily tasks unheeding of the great moment in which they live, and an ass, munching a dried wisp of a palm-branch, is a cruel reminder of the triumphal entry of the Christ, only a few days before, into the city of His betrayal and His Passion. Titian created a world of his own so filled with the grace of movement and the glory

of colour that there was no room in it for the emotions of every day; Tintoretto seems to remind us that all joy is mixed with sorrow, and all beauty is born of common things.

Paolo Caliari (called Veronese) (1528–1588), trained in the School of Verona, but from 1558 onwards painting in Venice for the rest of his life, shared to some extent the qualities and point of view of Tintoretto, and yet was a painter of a totally different kind. While Tintoretto's interest in realistic detail arose from his deep understanding of the part it played even in the greatest events of history and religion, Veronese loved material things for their own sake. To him, the magnificence of sumptuous architecture, of fine clothes and jewels, of splendid feasts, and tables loaded with gold and silver vessels, was delightful in itself. So, all his pictures have this air of magnificence, just because to him it was the most beautiful thing in the world. Whether his subject be the *Feast in the House of Levi* (Accademia) or the *Christ in the House of the Pharisee* (Louvre), he can give it no other setting, for it is the highest tribute that he can offer to religion. The very attitudes and gestures of the guests at these great feasts are as magnificent as their clothes and their surroundings; and the dog that steals a bone in the corner, or the common folk on the fringe of the splendid crowd, are there, not for any meaning they can bear, but simply to give the atmosphere of modern reality that unbroken splendour might fail to convey.

His drawing is exuberant, sweeping in its lines, swift and graceful and free. His colour glows against the cool architectural backgrounds that he loved. His brush-work is almost impressionistic in its rapid rendering of forms; in the National Gallery, London, in the picture of the *Children of Darius before Alexander the Great* (N.G. 294), a daughter of Darius wears a drop-pearl that is rendered by but two broad strokes of the brush, one for the light upon the pearl, and one for its shadow on her breast: and in his **Vision of St. Helena*, also in the National Gallery, London (N.G. 1041), the play of light upon the drapery of rose and grey and gold, of the sleeping Empress, is rendered by a marvellous play of brush strokes this way and that, which

reveal the natural grace of the figure while they render the rich texture of the flowing robes.

He had inexhaustible invention, and a great decorative genius; but beside Tintoretto, he is rather empty—ingenious, not inspired, brilliant, but lacking depth. His appeal is always to the senses, scarcely ever to the emotions, never to the soul; nevertheless he must be numbered among the great masters of the Italian Renaissance, to whom purity of drawing, harmony of colour, and balance of design were still the foundations of their art, and the noble presentation of worthy themes their aim. When he, and, ten years after him, Tintoretto passed away, the great traditions passed with them; for the power and glory of the Venice that bore them, and the religion and romance that inspired them, had faded, and though the two Tiepoli, father and son, still had power of draughtsmanship and grandeur of design, they could but reflect in their work the light of other days, that grew fainter with the growing distance of the years. Venice of the 17th century looked backward, living on her past: though still nominally a free Republic, she was no longer a force in Europe, but a survival, something of a curiosity. First the rise of Genoa, by reason of the African discoveries of the Portuguese, and then that of the ports of northern Europe, Hamburg and Antwerp, London and Bristol, following the discovery of the New World, had left her behind in the race for commercial supremacy: and the gradual closing of the Eastern ways of trade by the spread of Turkish conquest had shut her out of that world of commerce which had been the source of her rise to power; and so she just lived idly on, amid her palaces falling to decay.

Still, such was her vitality, that even in the 18th century she found a new outlet for her now useless patriotic pride in the love of her own dying glories, in the cherishing of her traditional pageants, the observance of her ancient ceremonial; and her two great painters of the 18th century had a fame beyond their own borders. Antonio Canale (1697–1768), more commonly known as Canaletto, is chiefly famous for his pictures of Venice herself, her buildings

and canals, her regattas and her crowds of loungers in her coffee-houses in the Piazza of St. Mark. Though, too often, his work is hard and dry and mechanical, scarcely more, indeed, than topographical painting, his reputation has suffered much from the host of dull imitators to whose feeble work his name has been given ; and in his best work there are a lovely tenderness of atmosphere, a delicate precision of form, an ethereal lightness of passing cloud in the soft blue expanse of sky, which rank him as a great master, and a true descendant of the great Venetians of the 15th century. The noble **View towards Murano* in Buckingham Palace, with its splendid strength of dark architectural foreground, perfectly placed figures, and miraculous rendering of that most exquisite quality of Venetian light, the upward reflection from the water that meets the sunlight descending from the sky and permeates all shadows till they are full of colour, is a very great picture indeed, full of that peace which belongs to an age that is content to remember a lost greatness and to be grateful for the memory.

Francesco Guardi (1721-1793), a pupil and associate of Canaletto, at first sight seems to render cloud and movement of soft light and shadow with more variety and freshness, and indeed in all his work he has a certain freedom of brushwork to which Canaletto seldom attained : his figures, too, are given more dramatic action, and there is often a suggestion of some kind of " story-interest " in his little street scenes that is very lively and attractive : his atmospheric tone is silvery rather than golden, and even in quite small pictures he conveys the idea of great space ; but for dignity and strength he cannot be compared to Canaletto at his very best ; for while to him, though a Venetian, Venice had become " picturesque," so that he painted her almost as a foreigner might have done, to Canaletto she was still the Queen of the Waters, the City of Pageants, his own home. While Guardi paints her with curious interest, Canaletto paints her with love.

Canaletto visited England in 1740 and painted a large number of topographical views, among them a view of Eton College, now in the National Gallery, London (N.G. 942),

and many London views : but in these he is scarcely more than a topographer ; and to place one of these English works beside, for example, the wonderful little pictures of Venetian life in the Piazza of St. Mark, Nos. 2515 and 2516 in the National Gallery, London, is to realize at once what a true lover of his native city he was, and how that love gave him power and simplicity of expression with his brush. Though he wrote with his own hand on the back of his picture of the *Rotunda at Ranelagh* (N.G. 1429), that he had painted it with the utmost care, it cannot be compared with these slight studies made in his own native place.

Pietro Longhi (1702-1785) painted the gay artificial life of Venetian society, with its masked and cloaked revelers, and its insatiable curiosity for all new things. The Accademia has several of his boudoir scenes and fashionable interiors full of lively figures, and there is in the National Gallery, London, an amusing picture of a lady and three masked gentlemen gazing at a rhinoceros which stands gloomily in a pen deep in straw (N.G. 1101). Longhi has been compared to Hogarth, but he was not a satirist. He merely recorded lightly and pleasantly the pleasant, idle, rather foolish Venetian life of his time.

A painter now too little valued was Giambattista Piazzetta (1683-1754), the last of the great masters of free drawing and powerful light and shade, whose strange picture, called *The Fortune Teller* (L'Indovina), is in the Accademia. It is the picture of two peasant girls with a couple of boys in the background, and its meaning is obscure ; but in the bold freedom of its design and brushwork, and the splendid force of its lighting and modelling, it is worthy of the highest traditions of Venetian art, though its colour is unpleasantly cold, and there is a touch of harshness in its texture. The same cold, almost clayey colour, together with an equal boldness, and greater nobility of line and design, marks the work of his younger contemporary, Giambattista Tiepolo (1696-1770), to whom has been given the title of " the last of the old masters." He worked much in fresco, and also in oil, both on a large scale, basing his style upon that of

Paolo Veronese, and his religious pictures have both devout and dramatic intensity of feeling, beyond that of his chosen model, though he never approached him in his mastery of sumptuous colour.

His early frescoes, in the ceiling of the Scalzi Church at Venice, were destroyed during the late war : but in his great work, *The Story of Antony and Cleopatra*, at the Palazzo Labbia in Venice, may be seen to perfection his power of expressing space and movement in great architectural settings.

In 1762 he went to Spain, remaining there till his death in 1770 : and in the work of his son, Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo (1727-1804), whose art follows the same lines of dignity and freedom of drawing, the influence of the style of Murillo, with which he became familiar in 1762-1770, is clearly seen. Domenico returned to Italy, working in Genoa in 1783, and in Venice to the end of his life : and to these two painters, father and son, belongs the great achievement of having brought down to the beginning of the 19th century the spirit of grandeur and sincerity of the great art of the Italian Renaissance.

The Venetian landscape painters of the 18th century, Zuccarelli (1704-1788), Zais (17?-1784), and their followers, were clever but shallow craftsmen with little feeling for natural beauty, poor colour, and facile design, pleasing in an artificial way ; they are chiefly interesting to us because of their slight influence upon the growth of landscape painting in England. It is said that Zuccarelli encouraged Richard Wilson to persevere with landscape ; and if this is true, we owe him a great debt.

Venice, then, was the last of the Italian states to develop the art of painting beyond its mediæval limitations ; but on the other hand, Venice was still producing painters worthy of the name a full two centuries after the last of the great painters of the rest of Italy had passed away.

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The story of the great pioneers of painting in Italy is now as complete as we can make it in this short compass : but their stock had many branches, some of which bore noble

fruit : and for the inspiration of the Schools of Verona and Ferrara, Bologna, and Parma we must turn back for a moment to those two painters who, more than any others, served to carry the principles, the one of mediæval and the other of Renaissance art, to the north-east of Italy.

Antonio Pisano, called Pisanello (1397-1455), at Verona, stands almost alone. Primarily a medallist, and, in this form, one of the most remarkable portraitists of any age, he painted but little, and then in a style wholly his own, with rich colouring, and accurate observation of the forms of flowers, trees, and animals as well as of human beings ; but there can be no doubt that he was strongly influenced by Gentile da Fabriano, and so was brought into touch at once with the sentiment of Siena and with the sound craftsmanship of Florence, which he used entirely in his own way, adding to them his own rich and realistic sense of colour. There are two of his very few surviving pictures in the National Gallery, London, both of them small and packed with interest. The one is the **Vision of St. Eustace* (N.G. 1436), of the stag which, after he had hunted it all day through the forest, turned at twilight and faced him, with the vision of the Crucifix shining between its antlers. The Saint is gay and trim in hunting dress, and bravely mounted on a bay horse, and all the forest's green gloom is filled with animals. It is a picture that stands quite alone in mediæval art : so also is the other National Gallery picture* (N.G. 776), which represents St. Anthony, old and cowed, bell in hand, and his pig, a great black boar, crouched by his side, and St. George, the very picture of fashionable grace in his silver armour with its stiff overdress, a great straw hat upon his head, and the dragon by his side. They face one another in a sunlit landscape of marvellous realism for that age, and above them in the sky appear Our Lady and the Child in a glory of golden rays.

Pisanello founded no school, though it may be that we could trace his influence here and there upon individual artists of other schools, if we could stay to dwell upon the task : but it was Gentile's influence that first set the painters of Ferrara and Bologna seeking for a sound basis for their

art, and it was in Padua, in the School of Squarcione, that they found it. Cosimo Tura (1420?–1495) of Ferrara derived thence a love of drawing that made him seek difficulties for the sake of solving them, so that he became fantastic and even eccentric both in design and colouring. His anatomical forms are exaggerated to show every joint and muscle, and his high, clear colour and involved architectural design emphasize the technical labour of his art. His *Madonna and Child enthroned* (N.G. 772), and *St. Jerome in the Wilderness* (N.G. 773), display his outstanding quality of painstaking yet pleasing austerity. Francesco del Cossa (? 1435–1477), who worked with him, tempered asceticism with freedom of line, sobriety of colour, and naturalism in landscape. His *S. Vincent Ferrar* (N.G. 597), originally the central figure of a triptych, is a characteristic example of his style. From them comes the School of Bologna, with Lorenzo Costa (1460?–1535), feeble in characterization and ingenious rather than inspired in design, as its first exponent. His drapery is formal, and his sense of colour is weak, but there is a certain charm of sentimental grace about his work; and in his associate Francia (Francesco Raibolini, 1450?–1517), a goldsmith before he was a painter, who took up painting almost against his will, we have a glorious example of what that charm could become when it was allied with harmonious colour and romantic religious feeling. The great altar-piece that he painted for Lucca, of *Our Lady and St. Anne with the Holy Child, Enthroned among Saints*, is in the National Gallery, London (N.G. 179), and will serve to illustrate the whole of his work. Certain specified saints—SS. Sebastian, the stayer of plague, Paul, John Baptist, Laurence and Romuald—all had to be introduced into the picture, and in these we see some of the stereotyped sentimentality of Costa; the infant St. John Baptist becomes a mere decoration, tripping gaily across the picture. But on the throne, old, smiling St. Anne, seated beside Our Lady, holds out an apple to the Child, who leans from His mother's lap to take it from His very human grandmother. His mother's hands scarcely hold Him; she sits with downcast eyes, as though day-

dreaming, hardly conscious of the bodily presence of her Son. Her lovely, youthful face is faintly touched with shadows as with a prophecy of grief: and in the lunette above, that completes the altar-piece, still the Mother holds her Son: but it is a Mother whose face is old and drawn with sorrow realized, and the Son is the dead Christ, laid to rest by passionately grieving angels.

This picture is at once tender and dramatic, quiet in design, and moving in its reality of feeling; and so it sums up in their noblest form all the characteristics of the School of Bologna, which produced, at the hands of L'Ortolano, Timoteo Viti, Garofalo and others, many works of sincerity and charm, but none to rival this masterpiece.

Through Francesco Bianchi of Modena is descended also from Cosimo Tura that light-hearted giant among painters, Antonio Allegri (1496-1534), called Correggio from the place of his birth; he studied for a time under Francia at Bologna, and also worked with Costa at Mantua. But Correggio possessed the true freedom of genius, and learned, or rather stole, from whom he pleased, making all he took into a thing of his very own. Raphael and the Umbrians gave him decorative grace, Francia sweetness of sentiment, and from Michelangelo himself came power of modelling and mastery of bold, dramatic light and shade; though, in this last matter, he learned much from Dosso Dossi, a painter of the Bolognese group who had been greatly influenced by Venetian art. Thus, there was scarcely a source in all Italy from which Correggio did not draw, and the one thing that none of them could teach him was sorrow. His art is dainty, dramatic, overwhelming in movement, supremely decorative, all at once or by turns, but never sorrowful. The greenwood in which *Mercury and Venus teach the infant Cupid his letters (N.G. 10) is full of mystery and softly moving light, but it is a mystery that contains no fear: Cupid bends over his book with a great air of baby seriousness, but his two idle, graceful teachers take him no more seriously than he wishes to be taken. The exquisite forms, with the delicate tones of their bare limbs gleaming softly in the silvery light, exist only for

beauty and for joy of being alive. In the **Holy Night* at Dresden, which represents the Adoration of the Shepherds, all that matters is the flood of light that glows from the body of the Child: and in the great *Assumption* in the dome of the Cathedral at Parma, draughtsmanship and light and shadow and decorative design are lavished in a whirl of ascending figures with a prodigality that leaves one breathless, and wondering how much a lesser master would have tried to do with such a wealth of invention and labour: but indeed the idea of labour is the last that we ever associate with Correggio, for all his work is filled with the spirit of pure delight, and utter ease. We need not deplore the fact that care-free happiness has found one great genius to express it, nor blame Correggio, as some have done, for giving his supreme mastery no greater labour than the painting of joy.

CHAPTER III

THE NETHERLANDS

AT the same time that Fra Angelico in Florence, Gentile da Fabriano in Rome and Venice, and Pisanello in Verona, were building up each in his own way the foundations upon which the great Italian art of the Renaissance was to stand, in Flanders, far from any ancient tradition of Byzantine or of classical art, a school of painting was coming into existence, which was in some respects immensely in advance of anything that Italian painters had done as yet.

The Italian painters had only learnt by slow degrees to use their eyes. Both in purpose and in method, the painting of pictures was a thing governed by long-established custom, and we have seen how difficult it was for the pioneers of a more convincing kind of painting in Italy to depart from the old way. In Western Europe the painter had no such handicap; from the very first he saw the things he painted, with his own eyes, and drew them in his own way. His own experience was his teacher, and his own enjoyment and imagination were his guides.

Consequently, however bad his drawing might be, and however clumsy his painting, his pictures were never tame or dull; and, just because, to draw at all, he had to look at men and things for himself, his drawing, far from being bad, is marvellously accurate, and his colouring, in which he aimed not at decoration but at truthfulness, is rich and soft and varied as no Italian colouring except that of the Venetian painters ever was.

We know very little about the painting of Flanders before the end of the 14th century. Painters in Flanders before that time for the most part painted miniatures in books, work which required very exquisite and delicate drawing and colour, and the power to illustrate a fact, or an incident, in a lively and interesting way; and it is easy to see the effect of this, which was rather an everyday need than a tradition, in the work of the first great master of the Flemish School, Hubert van Eyck (1366-1426) and his brother, Jan van Eyck (1380-85?-1441).

This is the great altar-piece of the Church of St. Bavon, at Ghent, commonly known, from the subject of its centre panel, as **The Adoration of the Lamb*. The picture was begun about 1424, and all of it, with the exception of the two panels with figures of Adam and Eve, which were painted by Jan van Eyck after his brother's death, may be by Hubert van Eyck, but as it was not finished till 1432, six years after the death of Hubert, it is likely that at least all the figures on the outside of the shutters are by Jan. The whole altar-piece is a polyptych, that is, a picture painted on several panels hinged together, so that the panels at the sides serve as shutters to close over the central panel. Altogether it consists of twenty pictures, namely, the lower half of the central panel, containing the *The Adoration*, the upper half, containing three paintings, *Almighty God*, or possibly *Christ Enthroned* (centre), the *Virgin Mary*, and *St. John the Baptist*, and the shutters, each of which is painted with four pictures on the inner, and four on the outer side.

We need not, however, concern ourselves here with any but the panel of the *Adoration*, and the first thing that strikes us with regard to it is the fact that although the colours in it are many and various and brilliant, they are not sharply separated from one another, but fall together in beautifully harmonious masses, toned down and bound together, as it were, by soft and mellow shadows.

This is a thing which no Italian art can show us for at least a century after this picture was painted ; and indeed the Italian painters never sought or found it in the same way ; yet we shall find it in all Flemish painting from first to last.

Why is this ? It is due to two things. Firstly, although it was the Flemish painter's aim to make a beautiful picture of his subject, the subject itself interested him more than its decorative effect. Therefore, though a well-balanced design was important to him, he desired to lay stress not upon the pattern of his panel, but rather, upon the meaning of it, and the human interest of it ; so that while he was careful to balance his groups of figures well against one another, he was careful too to group them naturally, and

to give them space to move, so that they should look as if they had come there of their own accord, and not as if they had been put there to decorate a flat space.

Now this point of view had some very important results. One of them was, that in Flanders, painters began to take an interest in perspective much sooner than the Italians, because it was necessary to them, in order to group their figures naturally instead of merely piling them up one behind the other on a flat background, as the Sienese painters, for example, were still doing in many cases ; and if we compare the beautiful rendering, in spite of minor faults, of the meadows, the hills, and the distant city, and the lovely sky beyond, in this picture, with the careful, laboured, unsuccessful perspective in the *Rout of San Romano*, by Paolo Uccello, who spent his life in the study of perspective, we shall see at once that what was to the Florentine painter a scientific problem was second nature to the Fleming.

Another result was, that, in the drawing and painting of both faces and figures, the Flemish painters were from the first portrait-painters. They looked at individuals, not at types. The way men stand, the way they wear their clothes, every little thing that goes to make one man different from others, are all observed and drawn most carefully, so that the people in the *Adoration* are interesting, not only as groups, but as separate human beings. This tended to make the painter a very good draughtsman, for he could not be content with knowing what a perfect human being ought to be like, and to go on repeating that, but he had to be able to observe and draw all kinds of personal eccentricities and even oddities of form and feature ; and so his drawing did not get stiff or formal or dull.

The other reason for the rich harmony of colour, and the softness of the shadows in the work of Flemish painters is one which affected not only painters, but all those who dwelt in Flanders. It was just this, that in Flanders the sunshine is less strong than it is in Italy. Consequently the shadows are not so deep or sharp as shadows are in Italy ; and because the sunshine is gentle, and does not glare and scorch, the grass is greener, and the sky is a softer

blue, and colours need not be hard and strong to be seen at all, as they must be beneath a southern sun. So, as we have seen already, in regard to Venice and Venetian painting, it is the climate that dictates what kind of colour-sense a people shall have. A Florentine of Hubert van Eyck's day might have thought these colours dull and muddy and lacking in strength, just as to northern eyes the colouring of Botticelli or Perugino or Raphael is at first sight formal and unreal.

It is only in the painting of Venice, and even there not before the time of Giovanni Bellini, who was perhaps just beginning to learn to paint when Jan van Eyck died, and who was not born till two years after Hubert was already dead, that we find the least desire to paint distance as it is painted in this picture. Again and again we have to record the influence of Venetian painting on that of the rest of Europe, but in this case, as we saw when considering the history of Venetian art, it is the other way round. One of the greatest gifts that Flanders made to art was the power to see and enjoy, and to paint, the beauty of the world in which we live. The Flemings had a natural love of scenery, and were the first real landscape painters in the world.

Now, when we turn to the work of Jan van Eyck, we shall lose sight for a time of this love of landscape ; but in its place we shall find something else, which is part and parcel of the same national character : for if a man loves scenery, it means that he loves things as he finds them, and that he *finds* beauty by accident, rather than that he *makes* beauty by set rules : and to such a man it will be possible to find beauty in things that, judged by the rules of a mere decorator, ought not to be beautiful at all. So it is not surprising that Jan van Eyck, when he painted the portraits of **John Arnolfini and his Wife* (N.G. 168), dressed in what nowadays seem rather comical clothes, and standing in a bedroom, should have been able to make a beautiful picture of these two people, of whom one at any rate is most painfully plain.

There are two ways of looking at this picture—piecemeal, or as a whole ; and the strange thing is that it is equally beautiful looked at in either way.



JAN VAN EYCK
G. Arnolfini of Luca and his Wife
(*Flemish*)

We may look at the two faces, and we feel that we should know those two people instantly if we met them in the street, even if they were dressed in modern clothes. They are real people, and van Eyck has painted them with the same minute care that he has spent on the convex mirror on the wall, with its frame set with tiny pictures of the Passion. In the same way he has painted each bead of the scarlet rosary that hangs beside it, the brass chandelier with its one candle alight, the orange on the window-sill, and two more in the cupboard below, the pair of pattens in the corner, and the little woolly dog in the foreground. All these things, and the great red bed as well, and the velvet robe with dark fur edging and the heavy green dress trimmed with white fur, are real portraits of the things themselves, and to have painted them so van Eyck must have studied them with keenly observant eyes.

But look at the picture as a whole, and the enormous importance of the one thing in it that I have not mentioned becomes plain at once. The light steals into the room from the window at the side, behind the two figures. It creeps in gently, casting no harsh shadows, making no glaring spots of vivid colour. It is very gentle, but very penetrating, and under its soft influence the whole room and everything in it becomes a beautiful and unalterable scheme of colour. Only the two faces, the joined hands, and the high lights upon the chandelier and the mirror stand out from it at all. It is a perfect example of the beauty that comes to common things by the accident of light, and the unity of tone that it gives to them.

That van Eyck was consciously aiming at simple reality, that he wanted to paint not merely the portraits of two people, but also, so to speak, the portrait of their surroundings, is shown by the way in which he has signed this picture : for he has not written "Jan van Eyck painted this 1434," but "Jan van Eyck was here 1434" (*Johannes de Eyck fuit hic 1434*), as though he threw open a door and showed us the very room in which he painted. A little thing like this is worth notice, because it lets us into the mind of the painter, and helps us to understand how he thought of his

own work ; and it is interesting in another way, for it reminds us that these wonderful pictures, with their rich deep colour and rendering of space and light, are only one generation removed from the book-illuminations of the 14th century, which were second in importance to the books of which they were but illustrations. The idea of illustration is still at the back of the mind of the painter, and influences him as it never influenced the Italian painter, whose first idea was decoration. This seems a little thing, but it is of tremendous importance in the history of art ; for, as we shall see, each nation has had its own reason for painting, and in each case that reason has directed the progress of the art.

We have already seen how Jan van Eyck, in his travels in Italy, had much to do with the introduction of oil-painting into that country, and, consequently, with the rise of the Venetian School ; and therefore it is interesting to compare a religious picture by him with the work of the great Italian painters of his day. The result of the comparison is very astonishing.

Fra Angelico was exactly contemporary with Jan van Eyck ; Gentile da Fabriano, Pisanello, Masaccio, Uccello, and Fra Lippo Lippi were all working in his lifetime ; and if we place beside the works of these great artists van Eyck's **Travelling Altar-piece of Charles V*, now in the Dresden Gallery, we shall find that only one of them had anything like the same object as van Eyck, and that, for all their greatness, there are certain qualities in which they lag far behind the Flemish painter.

The travelling altar-piece represents Our Lady enthroned, with the Holy Child upon her knee. She wears a dark blue dress, which is almost hidden by a great scarlet mantle on her shoulders, draped across her knees, and hanging even over the step of the throne ; and her red-golden hair falls in soft ripples over her shoulders. She is seated in a church beneath a high canopy of dark green woven tapestry with a rich pattern of great flowers and tiny golden lions, hanging in straight folds : on either side of her is a colonnade of coloured marble columns on tall bases, and with delicately

carved capitals : and the arcade above, the statues of saints under their tall crocketed canopies, and the windows of the upper story are all drawn in the minutest detail in wonderful perspective. Even the cords that uphold the canopy are not omitted. The floor is paved in an elaborate pattern of many colours, and a gay Oriental carpet is laid upon it, descending from the raised dais on which the throne is set.

The face of the Virgin is sweet and placid, but not in the least ethereal or unreal ; and the Child is a lively, golden-haired baby boy, so natural that it does not seem at all extraordinary that he should hold in his hand a long ribbon-like scroll with lettering upon it.

The picture is that of a scene as real to the painter as his portrait of Arnolfini and his wife : exactly as he painted their portraits in their own house, he has painted the portraits of the Virgin and the Child in *their* house, adorning that house with all the beautiful details that he could bring together in their honour ; but all the details are real details ; they are not merely decorative, but actual, and the impression that the picture conveys is of the actual presence of the Virgin and Child in a church, a thing seen, not imagined, by van Eyck.

Fra Angelico, surely, would almost have been shocked by such a picture : even though he gave thought to perspective, as in his *Annunciation* at S. Marco, and painted his cloister and his palisaded garden with loving care, his figures are the figures of a dream, a stately and religious dream, not figures of reality. The drapery of his angels flutters this way and that, as no actual breeze could ever stir them : and his colours are dainty and gay and pure, not because he had ever seen them so in life, but because their daintiness and gaiety and purity were what he felt was right and appropriate to a divine subject.

Masaccio sought after reality—remember the grey cloaks of the two figures in the **Adoration of the Kings*—but fell far short of the realism of van Eyck, because, to him, the important thing was the reality to each other, not to you and me, of the figures in his pictures, that is, their dramatic

reality : to cut a long story short, the aim of the Italian painter was to represent action or sentiment, while that of the Fleming was to represent a thing as he actually saw it ; only Pisanello, of all the Italians of the time, came near to van Eyck in his enjoyment and representation of the actual world around him for its own sake ; and he was the greatest portrait-maker of his time, whose marvellous portrait medals show how closely he studied and how admirably he could reproduce the features of his subjects.

The clumsy drawing of the pot of lilies and of the pavement in Lippo Lippi's *Annunciation* in the National Gallery, London (N.G. 66) would have horrified Jan van Eyck ; yet the two graceful figures of the Archangel and the Virgin bow their heads in the wonderful moment of their meeting, entirely heedless of any world outside themselves, while van Eyck's Virgin of the *Travelling Altar-piece* most certainly *knows* that her portrait is being painted. That is, in a sense, the penalty which the Flemish painter has to pay for his wonderful skill in representing the reality of things : for though he can paint anything that human eyes can see, with far greater truth than the Italians of his time, he cannot convey the idea that the moment he paints is one that no human eye, but only the human heart, can ever comprehend. What he gains in actuality he loses in spirituality ; and as Jan van Eyck is less spiritual than Hubert, so each successive generation of Flemish painters is more tied down to earth as time goes on.

Two portraits in the National Gallery, London, besides that of Arnolfini and his wife, show, however, how much the world owes to this wonderful power of Jan van Eyck to paint faithfully what he saw. One of them, the *portrait of a man in a red turban-like head-dress (N.G. 222), is so startlingly real that we can only marvel at the way in which every fold of the turban and every wrinkle of the long lean face have been, as it were, translated into drawing and colour ; we feel that, so far as the actual craft of drawing and of the handling of colours is concerned, van Eyck knew already, five hundred years ago, more than the vast majority of us can ever hope to learn to-day. As a portrait of a man,

it convinces us instantly of its truth, and as a beautiful piece of colour, it shows the exquisite colour-sense of the man who could keep so harsh a note as scarlet well subdued, and make the pale flesh tones stand out beside it boldly.

The richness and depth of tone which were obtained by the use of oil, of course, helped the Flemish painters to subdue their colours far more surely than the Italians could do with the older tempera method; and Flemish painting owes much of its beauty to this quiet richness. Even the brilliant colouring of such a painter as Robert Campin (1375-1444) is softened and unified by the medium used, and his *Virgin and Child in an Apartment* (N.G. 2609) shows how wide was the range of colour that even so early a Flemish painter was able to use; the blue-grey mantle, with its soft and tender colour, increases the strength of all the varied colours round it and makes it plain that the minute detail of the various objects in the picture, although interesting in itself, is less important to the artist than the harmony of the whole; and the glimpse of the houses, seen through the open window, is painted in a scale of colours so delicate, and yet so strong and clear, that it is obvious that Campin could be quite certain of getting the exact tint he wanted in a way that would have been impossible in any other medium than oil.

This advance in the craft of colouring came not merely because the damper climate of Flanders made a "water-proof" medium necessary, but also because the Flemish painters felt the need for softer and richer colour; and when we study the work of van Eyck, or of the pupil of Campin, Roger van der Weyden (1400-1464), we see that not only did they know how to use such deep and harmonious tones, but that they did not know how to use any others, for all their ideas of beauty were based upon colour-harmony and unity of tone. The *forms* of things, they took as they found them; it was in the building up of their colour-schemes that their art lay.

This is very remarkable in the case of Van der Weyden, for he was the son of a sculptor, and himself began his career as a sculptor; yet, though he was a wonderful

draughtsman and paid great attention to form, he did not idealize it in the least, and the beauty of his pictures consists in their harmonious range of colour, and in the poetic human interest of their feeling.

Nothing could be more charming, in its complete simplicity, than his picture of **St. Luke painting the Portrait of the Virgin*. St. Luke has a grave, pleasantly ugly, earnest face, and as he kneels to his sacred task he seems reverently absorbed in it; and the Virgin sits with an air of gentle patience that is almost amusing. It is all delightfully real, in spite of the rich, un-studio-like setting of the room with its boldly tiled floor; and the dark folds of the robe of St. Luke on the one side of the picture, and the more flowing lines of the dress of the Virgin upon the other side, make, by the solidity of their colour and the bigness of their drawing, a beautiful contrast with the minute detail and high clear tone of the open landscape seen through the window beyond them both.

In the work of van der Weyden, we see how brilliant a thing a fine colour-sense can be, when the man who possesses it is also able to observe and render many varieties of form as well; for there is more conscious design in the drapery of this St. Luke, than in the careful and entirely literal painting of the folds of the red turban, or of the green dress of the wife of Arnolfini by Jan van Eyck. It is this touch of sculptural feeling, combined with delicacy and boldness in the use of colour, which makes the work of van der Weyden nobler and more serene than that of any other of the Flemish painters, with the exception of Hubert van Eyck. Perhaps van der Weyden was lifted a little out of the literal and actual world by his travel in Italy; but his *Deposition from the Cross* in the Escorial, which he painted in 1436, long before his visit to Italy (1450), is almost awe-inspiring in its solemnity, its quiet colour, and solid modelling of closely studied forms; and in Italy it was the work of Gentile da Fabriano, with its wealth of detail and sweetness of sentiment, that he admired more than anything else in Rome; so it may be that in van der Weyden we have an example of a man who was able naturally to see not only

the beauty, but also the dignity, of common things. Though he painted forms as he found them, like any other Fleming, somehow he always managed to see them at their noblest, and to paint them so.

The influence of van der Weyden was very great, not only in Flanders, but in Germany, at Cologne and Mainz, and also in Spain. We shall see, when we come to the consideration of Spanish art, how his qualities of truthfulness and dignity were exactly those which would appeal to the Spanish mind ; but in his own country, in the work of his own pupil, Hans Memlinc, a kind of grave yet fanciful tenderness takes the place of the monumental character of the work of van der Weyden. The sense of form is less strict, and, in the landscape background of the portrait of **Niccolo Spinelli*, the medallist, which Memlinc painted at Bruges in 1467, the way in which the painter has softened down the forms of trees into masses of colour, just touched with gleams of light, till at last they melt into the golden haze of the sky, provides an ideal contrast for the broad masses of the head and shoulders of the man, in which there is no distracting detail at all. The eyes, the white collar, and the golden coin which Spinelli holds so daintily in his fingers, have it all to themselves, for the modelling of the face is slight, and the black coat has no sharp contrasts of light and shadow. Memlinc is conscious of the forms of the things he paints, but he chooses which of them to see, and so moves a step away from the literal realism of the Flemish painters before him ; and, as his colour has not to compete with strongly emphasized light and shade, he can afford to keep it very quiet indeed. This picture has no brilliant colour in it at all, and yet it is as rich in effect, with its soft golden-grey tone, as a picture full of strong colour and equally strong lights and shadows ; and very tiny details—like the two swans in the shadow of the distant trees—impress themselves more clearly on one's mind than any of the various objects, houses and trees and the like, in van der Weyden's picture of St. Luke ; the way in which Memlinc has put those two swans into the picture just above Spinelli's shoulder is extremely clever ; for by catching our

attention, and drawing our eyes into the distance, they prevent the bright gold coin from taking up too much of our interest, as it would otherwise have done.

There are several of his works in the National Gallery, London, and all of them have this air of gentle quietude, however much colour there may be in them ; but it is at Bruges that he is seen at his best, and it was there that he lived and painted almost all his life.

The work of a contemporary of van der Weyden, Dierick Bouts (1400-1478), who represents the Dutch, as van der Weyden represents the Flemish side of Netherlandish painting in the 15th century, makes clear the closeness of the association between the two sections of the school, for some of his pictures have been taken at one time or another for the work of van der Weyden, and it is very likely that he was at one time a pupil of the master from Tournai ; but even so early as this, before there was any definite separation of the Dutch from the Flemish School, we can begin to see, as in his *St. Erasmus* at Louvain, the first signs of that peculiarly Dutch quality of disregard for obvious grace, which, in later centuries, almost reached the point of insisting upon obvious ugliness of individual forms in order better to indulge the artist's enjoyment of the more subtle beauties of colour, light and shade, and composition. In the work of Bouts the colour is often flat and the tone clayey, and the shadows are not always skilfully arranged : but there is a kind of sober dignity in his grouping, and simplicity in design, which prepare the way for the wonderful composition and almost brutal sincerity of Pieter Brueghel the Elder.

The painters of Antwerp, Bruges, and Ghent carried on the gentler tradition which blended grace with truthfulness and gaiety with sobriety. Hans Memlinc, Quentin Matsys, Hugo van der Goes, and Gerard David have each their own personal characteristics, but all avoid the commonplace. Quentin Matsys (1466-1530) in particular, though often his subjects are lacking in dignity, never fails to make up for this by the charm and grace which he gives to them, and by the liveliness and naturalness of their attitude and

gesture. There is in the Antwerp Gallery a picture—the left wing of a triptych—of *Salome giving the Head of St. John the Baptist to Herodias*, and one could find it in one's heart to forgive Salome her grim burden, for the sake of the airy grace with which she bears it, and the sprightliness with which she carries her splendid trailing dress of richly figured silk. There is often to be found a great deal of character-study in the pictures of this painter, and their colour is not so strong in contrast nor so varied as to distract attention from it. The **St. Mary Magdalene*, also at Antwerp, is a very quiet picture, with its soft brown fur collar and dull-gold sleeves, and, though there is much detail in the background of houses and landscape, it is kept so quiet in colour that it is the face of the saint, with her high forehead and little pointed chin, and drooping eyes that seem to show the traces of tears, that holds our attention. It is not in the least an imaginative picture, only the portrait of a rather sad, subdued young woman, but it is full of sympathy, as that Matsys were thinking more of the feelings than the appearance of the saint.

The work of Memlinc (? 1430–1494) is both more severe and more poetic than that of Matsys. It has more gravity, and greater force and precision of drawing, and more strength in the modelling of features and rendering of shadows. In some ways it may be said to combine the sincerity of Jan van Eyck with the solemnity of Rogier van der Weyden, and there is in it also a reminder of the religious fervour of Fra Angelico. It is quite marvellous in its fullness of detail, and in his fondness for elaborate interiors this painter reminds us of van Eyck. He was more than a generation older than Matsys, and was a pupil of van der Weyden before Matsys was born, so it is not surprising that he is nearer in style to the great founders of the School of the Low Countries; but the reason for returning for a moment to his work, is to point out that it is the character of a painter, not merely his place in the history of painting, which enables him to be great; and also, that what a painter loses in strength he may gain in charm. Quentin Matsys, though he knew more of delicacy of colour, unity of tone

and variety of composition than Memlinc, was not nearly so great a painter ; yet it is undeniable that his pictures are often more humanly appealing than those of his great predecessor. The variety of character and expression, and the keenness of sympathetic imagination, in the *Entombment* of Matsys, the central portion of the triptych already mentioned, are far beyond anything which Memlinc could have achieved, yet, for pure and forcible simplicity in telling a story, Memlinc, in the panels of the Shrine of St. Ursula in the Hospital of St. John at Bruges, shows more real greatness than Matsys ever possessed.

Beside these two painters, Hugo van der Goes (? 1435-1482) and Gerard David (1464-1523) are lesser men, so far as feeling is concerned ; if the **St. Victor and a Donor* at Glasgow is really by van der Goes it is much superior to any other work of his in expression of character and in rendering of form, and shows that, so far as the building up of a daring colour scheme is concerned, he was in advance of any Flemish artist of his time. To have balanced the pure scarlet of the Saint's shield, with its bold heraldic design of a golden sharbuckle, and the scarlet sword-belt close beside it, by the fluttering folds of a rose-coloured pennon streaming across the sky, is a master stroke that called both for imagination and courage ; and he has bound together the two figures into one solid composition by drawing the rich brown fur of the saint's cloak right down over the brown-golden brocaded border of the canon's crimson cope. The ruby in St. Victor's wreath, and the scarlet stone in the ring of the ecclesiastic, are two more skilful touches of red, and the same colour appears as a piping at the edge of the cope. The whole picture is held together by these vivid touches, which emphasize the quietude of all the rest of the colour-scheme ; and the landscape background, though full of detail, is of a tender green, with a soft and distant sky, which makes the figures stand out with wonderful force.

Gerard David was an unequal painter except in one thing, and in that one thing he has never been excelled. In the painting of the work of the goldsmith or the weaver, he is

almost miraculous. There is a picture by him in the National Gallery, London (N.G. 1045), representing a Canon kneeling with his Patron Saints around him ; to describe it in detail would take many pages, for it is a marvellous catalogue of exquisite jewellery and gold-work, embroidery and brocade. The colour is magnificent in its richness and strength, and glows against its background of fresh green landscape. Each piece of gold-work and jewellery is the careful portrait of an actual piece, crozier or morse or mitre, and on the cope of one of the Saints, St. Martin of Tours, are embroidered representations of all the Saints in the picture itself, and many others beside. Yet all this elaboration is not the least fussy, and the picture as a whole is not gaudy, but splendid.

In his later years David was influenced both by Memlinc and Quentin Matsys, but he never reached the same success in the portrayal of character as they. In his picture, now at Berlin, of **St. Francis of Assisi*, though the colour is rich and dignified, and the drawing of the landscape is full of feeling for the beauty of natural forms and of light, the middle distance is rather clumsily arranged, and the figure of St. Francis is affected and awkward in attitude, while the expression of the face is very artificial : but the drawing of the drapery, with its heavy folds, is superb, and there is a real understanding of the value of strong shadows in the rendering of a figure. It is as though David had deliberately tried to do without the brilliance of his more usual work, and to keep as much as possible to a simple scale of blues and greens. At any rate it shows him as a painter with a remarkably advanced feeling for colour and tone, and a fine mastery of drawing, but rather lacking in power of composition. In fact, the consideration of one more Flemish artist of the 15th-16th century will explain to us why it was that it was left to the Dutch painters for nearly half a century to carry on the progress of painting in the Low Countries. No matter how great a draughtsman or colourist, poet, story-teller, and character-reader a painter may be, if he lacks one power, that of composition, he can never hand on a great tradition to his followers.

Jan Gossaert, called Mabuse (1472-1535), was an artist who was not only later in date than those works we have considered, but also summed up in his art the main characteristics of all of them. Indeed, it is not certain whether he was the pupil of Memlinc, David, or Matsys; but in 1508 when he was about thirty-six, he visited Italy in company with an Italian painter and engraver, Jacopo di Barbari, and there saw the work of Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo, and was to some extent influenced by them: the influence was not altogether a good one, for it resulted in some loss of his rich colour sense, and in a not very successful attempt at more idealistic drawing. It is in the picture which is perhaps his masterpiece, the **Adoration of the Kings*, in the National Gallery, London (N.G. 2790), that we may best trace the way in which he sums up the whole experience of the Flemish School, from the van Eycks down to his own day, and in so doing, reveals its fatal weakness.

That weakness may be shortly expressed by saying that when a Flemish artist tried to represent a subject in which there was room for more than one interest, he was unable to stick to the point. Every little detail of his subject, and of the story of which it was a part, interested him so much that he was distracted, and distracts those who look at his pictures, by the variety of interests that he introduces into it. Now an Italian painter, trained in the tradition that a picture was first and foremost a decoration, could treat every detail of it with equal care, and yet fit them all into one decorative design; in other words, the composition of his picture was more important to him than all the things in it which went to make it up. But a Flemish painter, starting from the idea that the human interest of his picture was of the first importance, and the picture itself of less importance, tended to forget decorative unity, so that, in the result, the interest of the parts was greater than the effect of the whole.

In the *Adoration of the Kings*, it is true that we can see at a glance what the picture is all about. Our Lady, with the Child on her knee, is in the very centre, with a background of a ruined building, and with angels, in exquisitely coloured

drapery, above her on either side, suspended in mid-air : but before we have had time to realize the real importance of these figures, our attention has been distracted by a dozen other delightful things. We find ourselves more interested in the difference between silk and velvet and cloth of gold, in the workmanship of sceptres and crowns, the simple reality of a dead-nettle growing between the broken slabs of the pavement, and the comical shapes of little dogs, than in the adoration of the Kings. The Kings themselves are much more important than the worship that they offer, and their gifts are quite as important as the Child to whom they are offered.

In the background, St. Joseph stands in a doorway and gazes upwards, as though he alone saw the angels, and his expression suggests that he is wondering what new kind of birds these are that have human bodies and are dressed in robes of shot silk.

Now Mabuse did not want to produce that impression at all : but the subject was too big for his imagination, and so it came about that unconsciously he divided it up into a great number of separate subjects, all competing with one another for our interest, because neither he, nor any other Flemish painter with the possible exception of Hubert van Eyck, had the decorative sense that enables a man to see a complicated subject, with all the beautiful things that go to make it up, as an indivisible whole.

In the National Gallery, London, also, is a delightful little portrait of a little girl, known as *Jacqueline de Bourgogne* (N.G. 2211), though it is uncertain whether it is she or not. She is a charming little person, and Mabuse has managed to suggest her childishness and yet to give her a dignity and seriousness beyond her years : but, for some reason of which we know nothing, he has represented this little girl of about twelve as holding an elaborate scientific instrument, an astrolabe : and when all is said and done this picture is quite as much a portrait of an astrolabe as a portrait of a girl. It does not matter much, because, as a rendering of colour and form and texture and character, it is a delightful picture ; but, all the same, it shows an uncertainty of

to the final contrast between the strongly lighted pinnacles of rock and the dark sky beyond them. In a landscape in the National Gallery, London (N.G. 1298), which, if not by Patinir, certainly belongs to his time and school, it is the contrast of feeling between the vertical lines of the rocky hills, and the easy curves of the winding river, that is the reason for the picture, and the backbone of its design; and in this case there is not even a little figure of a saint to form an excuse for the picture, which is a landscape pure and simple.

It is, however, in the work of Pieter Brueghel the Elder (1525-1569), that we see the most remarkable example of the bold lengths to which it was possible for a Flemish painter to go in innovation, even while he acknowledged to the full the influence of the principles of Renaissance art. It is at first almost impossible to realize that this strange, uncouth painter, with his squat and vulgar figures, harsh modelling, and peculiarly flat and subdued colour, was a contemporary of Titian, and knew the art of Raphael and Michelangelo. Yet the more we study his work, the more we see how boldly and independently he has made use of the principles that he laid down. The monumental simplicity of his *Adoration of the Magi* (N.G. 3556), is akin to that of Michelangelo, in its purity of composition and the sculptural massing of its light and shade, though there is not a figure in it which might not have been found on the quays of Antwerp. In his *Robbing the Bird's Nest*, at Vienna, a trivial subject treated without the smallest apparent departure from literal representation, the whole beauty of the picture lies in two things, firstly, in the delicate rendering of pure landscape, with its graduation of light and colour from foreground to distance; and secondly, the contrast between the bold curves and lively movement of the figure of the stout man full in the centre foreground, the inanimate forms of the trees behind him, and the still flatness of the meadow beyond.

Like Patinir before him, and his son Pieter Brueghel the Younger (1563-1637), he liked to see his landscape from above, for thus he was able to set his horizon high, and to

see the wide expanse set out in lines and masses that displayed its underlying pattern. This made it easier, as we see in the **Adoration of the Magi* of the younger Pieter Brueghel, to fill the picture with incident, and to use the masses of figures as the connecting lines of the design : and it may have been for this reason also that many of the early landscape painters were fond of snowy landscapes, for in these it was possible to emphasize the pattern still more by extreme contrasts of dark and light. However this may be, we owe to this Flemish period of compromise between northern naturalism and the Italian spirit of order, the evolution of pure landscape painting, and the discovery of pattern, which we may perhaps define as accidental design, the element of balance in nature which makes a landscape "picturesque," that is, adaptable to the narrow limitations of a picture, and so, easily seen as a whole by the eye and recorded by the memory.

Pattern, however, is not nearly so simple a thing as the arbitrary composition of the Renaissance art of Italy, and often consists in balance by contrast rather than by symmetrical arrangement ; and this is because, in the large spaces of landscape, it is not by one steady gaze at a single spot, but by the movement of the eyes, that we take in the whole design or pattern. One example must suffice. In the Antwerp Gallery is a *Repose on the Flight into Egypt* by Herri met de Bles (1480-1521) : at first sight it appears to be a symmetrically composed picture, for Our Lady and the Child are placed right in the centre of the picture, filling a simple pyramidal design, with a landscape background : but as we learn to know the picture better, we see that it is the balance of the dark trees on the right against the open landscape on the left, that prepares our eyes to enjoy the big broken outline of the trees descending in a long diagonal from right to left, and that the drapery of Our Lady's robe contains the same long diagonal line. What the artist has really enjoyed has been, not the stillness of the design, but the movement in the pattern of his subject—and this, in a picture that seems as though it were definitely of the older, more symmetrical kind.

Yet, by the middle of the 16th century, the Flemings had left behind them the fresh and vigorous manhood of their native art, and were gradually giving way to the temptation to imitate, without real understanding of its principles, the external manner of the Italian Renaissance. This tendency to empty and unmeaning flourish begins to be seen faintly in the work of Herri met de Bles, and more markedly in that of Lucas van Leyden (1494-1533) while that of Bernard van Orley (1491-1542) is typical of an artificial phase, which lacks on the one hand the austere charm and religious sincerity of Memlinc and Quentin Matsys, and on the other the bold and flowing grace of Italy. Of the later Flemish religious painters Adriaen Isenbrandt (*d.* 1551) was perhaps the most successful in using his knowledge of Italian art for the expression of Flemish feeling: and Willem Key (1515-1568) achieved something very like a free and natural use of purely Italian methods of drawing and design, while retaining a true Flemish feeling for colour: but it was left to the portrait-painters of Flanders to bridge the gap between the mediæval and modern painting of their race. Joos van Cleve (the "Master of the Death of Mary") (*c.* 1490-1540) was in spirit a portrait-painter even when engaged upon a religious subject, and all his work is full of the keen personal interest in individual character; and Antony Mor (1512-1578) leads us to the point at which Flemish art was ready for the genius of Rubens to bring it to its highest point, by absorbing into it the full decorative spirit of Italy without sacrificing anything of the Flemish love of personality and sense of glowing colour.

For, although it would be idle to deny that Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640) owed the greater part of his facility in draughtsmanship and design to his study of Italian painting, the former more especially to Mantegna, and the latter in a great degree to Titian, it is nevertheless true that in his sense of colour and of pattern he is wholly Flemish; and as a landscape painter he carried on and advanced the native tradition which had begun in the 15th century. He was born at Siegen in Westphalia, where his father was a

Protestant exile from Antwerp. At the age of ten, his father being dead, he returned to Antwerp with his mother, who had reverted to the Roman obedience. This was at the time when the submission of Flanders to Spain had brought Flemish artists back into the close touch with Italian religious painting which it had lost for a time, and his principal teacher was Otho van Noort (1558-1629) who had studied much in Italy, and was able to develop in him the decorative instinct which he put later to such good use. He was admitted a master-painter at the age of twenty-one, and in 1600 entered the service of the Duke of Mantua, remaining in Italy till 1608. During that time he visited Rome, Genoa, and Florence, and was much in Venice, greatly to his benefit as a painter, for he learned both to develop his magnificent colour-sense, and to control it by severe study of draughtsmanship; and all through his life he made a practice of copying the works of the great Venetian masters wherever he found them. He visited Spain in 1603, but was not at all influenced by the work of El Greco, then the only notable painter in Spain; but he frankly admitted that one reason for this was the total difference of the Spanish style from his own, although El Greco had been a pupil of Titian whom he so much admired.

Considering the length of his stay in Italy, the portrait of himself and his first wife (Munich Gallery) which he painted in 1609, is still surprisingly Flemish in its minuteness of detail and strong insistence upon textures of materials. But within the next few years he rapidly lost this restraint of drawing, and about 1615 painted the lovely **Fruitfulness* (Munich) in which the drawing is quite enveloped in the rich colour and full brushwork which are characteristic of his developed style. Perhaps the moment of his most perfect balance between drawing and colour is to be found in his portrait of his wife Isabella Brant, in the possession of H.M. the King: for as time went on his fame, both as an artist and a teacher, would have overtaxed his powers of production, if it had not been for his extraordinary speed of workmanship. Within three years after his return

from Italy he had the largest practice in Flanders, with a great staff of assistants, and was obliged in that time to refuse over a hundred pupils. Among his assistants were men who were specialists in their own kind of painting, such as Snyder, who painted the fruit in his picture *Fruitfulness*, mentioned above, and the eagle in a *Prometheus Bound* mentioned by him in a priced list of works at his studio; and Anthony van Dyck was among the pupils who executed large portions of works for him. His studio was a kind of factory, from which pictures were poured out, at prices varying according to the amount of work done upon them by his own hand. Although he was himself a remarkable landscape painter, the landscape backgrounds of his pictures, at any rate in the earlier years of his career, were generally painted by others, and even so important a commission as that of the *History of Maria de' Medici*, a series now in the Louvre, was almost entirely carried out by his pupils to his design. Yet, difficult though it be in many cases to distinguish the work of Rubens from that of his pupils in the great works designed and finished by him, there is no mistaking the character of his work. He was a master-painter in the truest sense, in that he set his stamp upon every work produced under his eye. In the *Chapeau de Poil* (the Felt Hat) in the National Gallery, London (N.G. 852), for instance, the lightness of touch and sensitive modelling of the flesh, and the wonderful transparency of the shadows, are Rubens' own, and none of his pupils ever came near to him in these qualities. When the death of his first wife in 1617 made him glad of the distraction and change afforded by the diplomatic missions that were entrusted to him, he left his school to carry on the business in Antwerp, and such painting as he did while on his travels in Holland, England, and Spain, was wholly his own, and gave him a new freshness of outlook and execution; and in 1628, one of the most interesting meetings in history between two painters took place at Madrid between the great Rubens at the height of his powers, and the young Velazquez, still groping his way patiently towards his own ideals. Rubens had nothing to learn from Velazquez,

perhaps (though it may be that after this second visit to Spain he realized as never before, the possibilities of black in a rich colour-scheme), but to Velazquez the meeting was the beginning of a new phase in his art, for it was through Rubens that he was able to obtain permission to visit Italy, there to find, as we shall see later, the key to the problem of painting that he had set himself to solve.

The second marriage of Rubens, in 1630, to Helène Fourment, marks the beginning of the last, and in some ways the greatest, period of his art. By some critics, his *Descent from the Cross*, in the Cathedral at Antwerp, is considered his masterpiece; and, in the magnificent freedom of its lines, and the massive counterbalance of light and shade, and almost bewildering variety of texture in the rendering of flesh, it is a tremendous achievement. Yet it is not, on the whole, as a religious painter that Rubens carries the deepest conviction; and great though this picture is, it is not primarily as a religious picture that it is so, but as a superb example of Rubens' control of a complex pattern of light and shade and colour. The absurd statement has been made that he defied all the accepted laws of composition. He did nothing of the sort: the composition of all his pictures is of the very simplest, and he never departed from a very narrow range of constructional schemes; but these were to him merely a framework which he overlaid with a wonderful variety of interdependent forms, so that they are easily overlooked, and our attention is taken by his thoroughly Flemish delight in texture and colour, especially that of human flesh; of this, there is no variety, from the delicate purity of the portrait of Isabella Brant and the pink and white luxuriant charm of Helène Fourment to the tan of a satyr and the bloated fat of a Silenus, that he could not render with perfect truth, and that he could not make part of the harmonious unity of his picture as a whole. That his pictures are to some voluptuous to the point of coarseness is due to the rather full-blooded Flemish ideals of his time, and not to any coarseness in Rubens himself: and that to him, the texture of flesh was

almost a language, is made plain by the way in which, in the *Judgment of Paris* (Prado version) he has placed before us three essentially different personalities, in the figures of the three goddesses, relying almost entirely upon the different tint and texture of their nude forms to convey the impression of difference of character and temperament. As a portrait-painter he has an exquisite refinement in his rendering alike of men, women, and children, and a simple dignity far beyond that of his brilliant, rather than inspired, pupil van Dyck. For grace and restraint it would be hard to surpass his portrait of *The Children of the Duke of Buckingham*, for richness and solid gravity the portrait of *Pieter Pecq*, or for glowing charm and grace the *Chapeau de Poil*. Supreme as a colourist, inspired in his mastery of intricate design and decorative balance, and utterly sincere in his enjoyment of material beauty, Rubens may well be forgiven an occasional heedlessness of severe draughtsmanship and a certain insensibility to the spiritual side of beauty: and in his latest work, when, at the Château de Steen, he painted the evening sunlight steeping the distant fields, filtering through the interlacing branches of the trees, and suffusing the deep shadows with its gold, he revealed in himself a tenderness, a quick response to the more subtle kinds of natural beauty, which mark him as a man of deeper feeling than his religious pictures and his great decorative allegories would have led us to suspect.

His pupil Jakob Jordaens (1592-1678) came nearest to him in these qualities, and, in richness of colour and strength of characterization in his portraits, sometimes came very near indeed to his master's power; but he lacked the fertility of invention and decorative sense, and the sensitive understanding of texture. His is, so to speak, the body of Rubens' art without its soul. Of Anthony van Dyck (1599-1641) it is harder to speak in simple terms; for if van Dyck had remained a Flemish painter in Flanders all his life, he might have retained and developed the sympathetic simplicity and directness which make his *Cornelius van der Geest* (N.G. 52) so compelling a masterpiece, though it was painted when



RUBENS
The Painter's Sons
(Flemish)

he was only twenty-one. That he did not do so is perhaps due to the fact that the supremacy of Rubens in Antwerp made it impossible for him to remain at home with any hope of reaching fame, though he was admitted a master-painter at the early age of nineteen. He worked as an assistant to Rubens for three years thereafter, and in that period his style was so like that of his employer that it is hard to tell the copies by van Dyck of pictures by Rubens, from the work of the master himself. However, it was in the direction of portraiture, for which Rubens had little time, that the talent of van Dyck lay, and when in 1620 he was invited to England by the Countess of Arundel, who had come to Antwerp to have her portrait painted by Rubens, he gladly accepted a post as Court painter to James I; but his desire to visit Italy caused him to break his contract, and he spent the next five years there, making the work of Titian his chief study. It was during the latter part of this period that he spent a considerable time in Genoa, where he found great popularity and much employment, and greatly increased his power as a portrait-painter, gaining both in richness of colour and vigour of characterization. In 1626 he returned to Antwerp, at a time when Rubens was absent on a diplomatic mission; after some years of great success there, he came to England soon after Rubens' return to Antwerp in 1632, and remained here for the rest of his life, with the post of Serjeant Painter to the King, to which was added a Knighthood, as well as an enormous practice as a painter of portraits.

With a tact and personal charm equal to that of Rubens, he lacked both the geniality and the dignity of the greater man: he was pliable rather than versatile, elegant rather than refined, vain rather than confident: and all these qualities show in his art. Perhaps for those very reasons he must be accounted a great artist, for it is certain that he expressed himself with unconscious truth by means of his art; and in two respects at least, he must be accounted greater than Rubens, if comparison be needed at all. His colour-sense was far more subtle, and more adaptable both to the mood of the painter and to the character

of his sitter; and, in the interpretation of his subject's mind, he had an almost uncanny insight, which, at times, he seems to be using with a kind of malicious sense of humour. Painting merchant princes in Genoa, he could be sumptuous to the point of ostentation, as his portraits of the *Marchese Cattaneo*, and of the **Balbi Children*, well attest; painting **Charles I on Horseback*, he is icily reserved, both in colour and design. The great picture of Charles I standing beside his horse, now in the Louvre, is graceful, spacious, and dignified, but utterly remote; but his picture of Charles I, the head and shoulders from three points of view on a single canvas—the *volto funesto*, the “doomed face,” as Bernini the sculptor, for whose use it was made, called it—is almost a prophecy. In it are pride, dignity, weakness, obstinacy, disaster: and the same man that painted this could also paint portraits, like the *Lord John and Lord Bernard Stuart* (Lady Louis Mountbatten), or the **Philip, Lord Wharton* (Hermitage), which, in their delicate scheme of golden-yellow, grey and brown, and soft silver tone, and in their stately yet gentle dignity, sum up the characteristics, that should have been so difficult for a foreigner to understand, of English aristocracy at the Stuart Court.

Van Dyck was very thoroughly a courtier, and some of his most striking work is that which was done for the English Court. Magnificence, whether sober or glittering, came naturally to him; and as a painter, his technique was admirably adapted to his needs, for his brushwork, especially in the rendering of drapery, was both bold and delicate, and has a great range between sharp precision and soft transparency; yet the portraits in which we can feel that he was wholly sincere, and really enjoying his art, are not English portraits. The *Cornelius van der Geest* of his youth is one, and the *Bishop Triest* belonging to Mr. Gulbenkian is another. Both these are portraits of men, and both these men wear black; and it is in his rendering of the infinite subtleties of black, made into a colour by the play of light upon drapery or garments, that van Dyck is at his very best; and in painting men, he was not so much handicapped

by the desire to flatter, as when he was painting the portraits of great ladies. Thus, perhaps, his greatest period is that between 1626 and 1632, when he was painting in Antwerp, where the Court was still in mourning for the death of the Archduke Albrecht ; it was during this period, too, that he painted the majority of his religious pictures, which show strong traces of the influence of Italian art, especially that of Titian and, in a less degree, of Raphael. Like many another portrait-painter, he had ambitions in the direction of historical and allegorical designs on a vast scale, but, perhaps fortunately, he never had any opportunity of satisfying those desires : but some of his smaller religious and classical subjects have great charm, and a greater strength and brilliance of colour than the majority of his portraits. His *Daedalus and Icarus*, formerly in the collection of Earl Spencer, is of peculiarly rich golden tone, compact design, and strong drawing ; and the *Rest on the Flight into Egypt*, in the Uffizi, of which he painted more than one version, is a remarkable example of the refining influence of Italian upon Flemish art, for, while it is unmistakably Flemish in the robustness of its forms and the aerial spaciousness of its landscape, and also in the complete absence of spiritual feeling, it has borrowed grace and lightness from Correggio, dignity from Raphael, and intimacy from Titian, in the presentation of its subject. In fact, there was no one from whom van Dyck, as a religious painter, could not borrow, though he was never a mere imitator. The only thing he neither possessed nor was able to borrow, was real religious feeling.

During the last years of his life, in England, he had little time for anything but portrait-painting, and much of his later work is hasty and careless ; he tended to leave too much to his assistants, and so was forced to limit his own originality of style : but from first to last he was a brilliant craftsman, a delicate colourist, and a fine draughtsman, with occasional flashes of genius to redeem him from mere courtly cleverness ; and of the host of imitators that he left behind him, William Dobson and Peter Lely were the only two who at all approached him, the one in the

sympathetic use of colour, and the other in the mastery of paint and in the composition of portraits possessing at once both dignity and charm. In Flanders there was none to follow him : but by now the Dutch painters had found their feet, and the art of free and independent Holland had come into being, owing nothing to Italy, little to religion, and everything to the national spirit of sturdy, commonplace self-respect which had inspired the Dutch in their struggle for political and religious freedom.

These same characteristics are to be found in at any rate one Flemish painter at this time, namely David Teniers the Elder. His feeling for picturesque landscape is very genuine, and both in this respect, and in his fondness for trivial and humorous subjects of village life he is a true descendant of Pieter Brueghel the Elder, though without his masterly sense of pattern, and he never arrived at Brueghel's power of making figures and landscape into a single design. Despite the liveliness and simple charm of his pictures of tavern scenes and village festivals, there is always a certain impression that the figure interest is separate from and competing with that of the landscape ; and he would probably have been greater as a painter of pure landscape than he was a genre painter—that is, a painter of unimportant incidents of common life—for his understanding of atmosphere, and of the arrangements of masses of light and shade, is very delicate and true. As a portrait-painter, he had dignity, but little charm ; the range of his colour is narrow, and his modelling and brushwork are inclined to harshness. The work of his son, also called David, is a more timid version of the same style, in which the commonplace character of the subject is not redeemed to the same extent by the beauty of its setting ; and with him, Flemish art is overwhelmed by the greater vigour and variety of the Dutch painters.

Yet, though the Flemish School faded at last into ineffectuality, it was, during its long existence, the foster-parent of every school of Western and Central Europe ; it shared with Italy the guidance of the first steps of Spain and France, while the Schools of Germany owed their very

existence to its influence ; and that of England, both indirectly through the German Holbein and directly through Rubens and van Dyck, and yet again through van Dyck's Dutch successor Lely, grew up in the leading-strings of its tradition.

CHAPTER IV

THE GERMAN SCHOOL

BEFORE we come to the parting of the ways which led Dutch art to its zenith and Flemish art to its decline, it may be well to review the short-lived but brilliant art of Germany, which, deriving its craft from Flanders, gave to painting a direction and a purpose all its own.

Of the four main groups into which the German painters are generally divided, namely, the Schools of the Rhine, Westphalia, Franconia, and Suabia, the last three grew up almost wholly under Flemish influence, and in tracing the history of their individual artists, the names of Rogier van der Weyden and Dirck Bouts occur again and again. Indeed, the School of Westphalia in particular was so strongly influenced by that of Louvain that it is at times difficult to distinguish a German from a Flemish work; and the only German School which began its activities early enough in the 14th century to develop to any extent upon independent lines, in method as well as in sentiment, was that of Cologne, or the Rhine School, as it is sometimes called. Moreover, the first known master of this school, Wilhelm von Herle, who was working in Cologne about 1350, was probably a native of Constance, and the fact that a painter was of the Cologne School does not necessarily imply that he belonged to that part of the world.

However, that at that date there were many artists in Cologne is shown by the fact that von Herle bought a house in the Schuldergasse (Painters' Lane). The chief activity of the painters whose existence is thus indicated was, as in Flanders, France and England, the illumination of books, and, in a less degree, the interior decoration of public buildings; Wilhelm von Herle certainly worked in both these ways, and attained great reputation; whether or no it is to him that the Limburg Chronicle, in 1430, referred as the best painter in German lands—"for he painted each person, of whatever form, as though he were alive"—it is plain from this reference that the German love of portraiture, the art in which German

painters were later to attain to great heights, was already strong.

Herman Wynrich von Wesel, the pupil of von Herle, married his widow, and carried on his business, working from before 1378 to 1414. His *St. Veronica*, at Munich, of which there is a copy in the National Gallery, London (687), reveals at once the sentimentality which is the outstanding characteristic of German art, especially in this early phase before the vigour and brilliance of the Flemish masters had modified it at all. The drawing is careful, but weak; the colour is soft and pleasant, and there is about the whole an air of prettiness that is more pleasing than convincing.

The greatest master of this school by far was Stephen Lochner, who, like von Herle, was born near Lake Constance, at Mersburg. He was working in Cologne from about 1440, and died there in 1451. It was he who painted for Cologne Cathedral the famous *Dombild* (Cathedral picture), a triptych, of which the central portion represents the *Adoration of the Magi*, while the wings contain, on the right, Ursula and some of the Eleven Thousand Virgins who accompanied her in her martyrdom, and on the left, St. Gereon and the Theban Legion (sometimes identified, however, as St. George, on account of his white banner with a red cross). In this picture, as in his exquisite *Madonna in the Rose Bower*, now in the Cologne Museum, the sentimentality of the earlier painters gives way to tender reality of feeling, not unmixed with a kind of seemingly gaiety. The colour is bright and fresh, and the figures are graceful and varied in attitude. The faces of women are rounded and almost child-like, and three of the men bear the unmistakable stamp of slightly idealized portraiture. In the *Madonna in the Rose Bower* groups of tiny angels, on either side of the central figures, are delightfully varied and natural in action and lively in expression, and the details of flowers and jewels are beautifully carried out. There is no trace of the austerity of the great Flemish painters, and, on the other hand, there is none of their thoughtful accuracy in the drawing of human forms: especially, the hands are as a rule incorrectly and even

clumsily drawn, and the figures are but insubstantially set upon their feet. Indeed, the Cologne School, in its combination of sweetness of feeling with weakness of execution, affords a striking parallel to the Sienese School in Italian painting.

However, with the very sincere and beautiful work of Stephen Lochner, the unadulterated German art of the Cologne School may be said both to have reached its height, and to have come to an end; for a new fashion was now set by the triptych painted by Rogier van der Weyden for the Church of St. Columba at Cologne, and thenceforward Flemish influence became paramount in the North German Schools, both of Cologne and Westphalia. In the former, the "Master of the Life of Mary," generally identified with Johann van Duyren, probably studied at Louvain with Dirck Bouts, and his *Presentation in the Temple* (N.G. 706) combines with the German love of varied expression and sentimental interest, a distinctly Flemish precision of drawing and solidity of the forms. In the latter, the "Master of Liesborn" shows almost equally the influence of the Louvain group of Flemish painters; he takes his title—for want of his actual name, which has been lost—from the great altar-piece executed by him for the Abbey of Liesborn near Münster, which was painted between 1465 and 1490. It was broken up in 1807, and eight portions of it are now in the National Gallery, London. The best of these, the *Presentation in the Temple* (257), is notable for the rich beauty of the colour, and for the commonplace character of the type of persons represented. Details of costume and architectural setting are minutely rendered, but the attitudes are awkward, perspective is weak, and the decorative balance of the whole is poor. The panel of SS. *Gregory, Hilary, and Augustine* (N.G. 255), from the same source, is a dull and meaningless group, whose central figure, St. Hilary, in armour and a short cloak, is of an impossible slenderness, and wears an irritating air of simpering self-consciousness, in astonishing contrast with the face of the dying Christ in the fragment (N.G. 259) of the central panel of the *Crucifixion*, in which the pathos of physical suffering is rendered with painful

realism. It is in the Westphalian group that we find the German artists most obviously veering between the extremes of sentimentality and brutality which are so frequently found together in a single character.

However, it was not the northern schools of Germany which made the important German contribution to the history of painting, but those of Franconia and Suabia, both of them Schools of Bavaria, and so in touch to some extent with Italian as well as Flemish influences. The early history of these schools is obscure, but both undoubtedly owed their principal debt to Rogier van der Weyden.

The Franconian School is mainly that of Nuremburg, and the Suabian, that of Augsburg, Ulm and Basle. Each school produced its great master, the former, Albrecht Dürer, and the latter, Hans Holbein the Younger. A link between the two schools was Hans Burgkmair (1473-1531), a pupil of Martin Schöngauer (1450-1488) of Augsburg, but influenced by Albrecht Dürer; conversely, Dürer himself, though he never worked with Schöngauer, was greatly influenced by the study of his work. However, a broad distinction may be drawn between the two schools, that of Nuremburg representing the imaginative and mystic, and that of Suabia the literally observant side of the German character. Both are marked by a very rich and splendid colour-sense, and by great power in the rendering of individual character.

Michael Wolgemut (1434-1519), who learned the art of painting under strong Flemish influence, was the first Nuremburg painter of importance, and his drawing, though faulty, is better than that of any North German artist; he shows also a marked feeling for the beauty of landscape and natural light. He was the master in painting of Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528), who was the son of a Nuremburg goldsmith, and learned his father's craft as well as that of a painter. Dürer's family was of Hungarian origin, which may account for the strongly imaginative strain and tendency to melancholy in the work of this, the noblest, the sweetest, and the strongest of all German artists.

After three years with Wolgemut (1486-1489), Dürer travelled for four years: his father had intended to send him to study engraving with Schöngauer at Colmar, but it was not until 1492, the year after Schöngauer's death, that he was able to visit Colmar. Nevertheless, it was by the work of Schöngauer that Dürer was most influenced in his engraving, for which he was even more famous during the earlier part of his career than for his painting. About 1493 he was in Italy, and probably in Venice, where he was to some extent influenced by the work of Bellini, but still more by that of Mantegna, for whose drawings and engravings he had the greatest admiration, bringing some of the latter back to Germany. This influence of the great Italian draughtsman was of the utmost value to him, for it enabled him to conquer the stiffness so usual in German drawing, and to attain both to greater power and greater grace in the representation of forms and in design.

Shortly before his father's death in 1502, Dürer painted the wonderful portrait of him which is now in the National Gallery, London (1938); already, in 1499, he had painted the brilliant portrait of Oswolt Krel, now at Munich, in which the beautiful drawing of the left hand is in startling contrast to the feeble hands in earlier German pictures, and the rendering of the textures of cloth, fur, linen, and tapestry is marvellously true. The little slip of landscape, seen beyond the background of red tapestry, reminds us of Bellini's similar treatment of backgrounds, but there is no decorative intention in the picture, as there is, for instance, in the *Madonna of the Trees* in the Accademia at Venice. Another famous work of this period is the *Portrait of Himself* (Munich), dated 1500, which represents the artist in half-length, facing straight out of the panel, with long fair hair flowing over his shoulders, and an almost Christ-like expression of sweet and melancholy gravity. These three portraits alone are enough to establish Dürer's claim to a place among the greatest of portrait-painters, draughtsmen, and colourists; but the **Portrait of a Woman*, at Berlin, is a startling example of what the full strength of Venetian influence could make of a German painter, with his warm and sympathetic

interest in the personality of the sitter. It glows with golden colour: the turn of the head, the slight smile on the lips and in the eyes, give it an extraordinarily lively charm, and the complete freedom and confidence of the drawing of the rounded lines divest it of all suggestion of the laborious care with which German painting as a whole makes us familiar. Dürer's second visit to Venice in 1505 enlarged his views and perfected his art; he remained there for two years, courted by the Venetian painters, and even by the great Giovanni Bellini himself. Already well known there as an engraver, he established his reputation as a painter by his *Feast of the Rose Garlands* painted for the German Chapel in Venice, and it was probably in Venice that he painted also his beautiful and pathetic *Crucifixion*, now in the Dresden Gallery. It is a remarkable example of the blending of northern sentiment and Italian feeling for grandeur and space in design: although only a miniature picture ($7\frac{1}{2}$ in. $\times$ 6 in.), it contains a vast expanse, with its low horizon broken by slender trees, and the dark overhanging sky which forms the background of the minutely but softly modelled figure of the Christ.

It is interesting to contrast this picture, with its commanding simplicity and economy, with the **Adoration of the Magi*, in the Uffizi, which was painted in the year before Dürer's second visit to Venice. In this picture, the rich brilliance of colour, variety of detail, and strong personality of the individual figures, produce an effect of liveliness and reality. The grouping of the Mother, the Child on her knee, and the old King who kneels before them, is quite delightful in its intimacy and naturalness; but the decorative effect of the rich colouring is rather accidental than deliberate, and the dignity of the painter's later work is lacking.

All through his life, however, Dürer kept the warmth of heart which made him a sympathetic portrait-painter. It was in 1516 that he painted the portrait of his aged master Michael Wolgemut (Munich), which is as full of insight into character as his much earlier portrait of his father; and his diary of 1520-21, when he travelled down the Rhine from Mainz to Cologne, and thence to Antwerp, is full of

very human touches. In Antwerp he was invited, as he had been in Venice, to accept an official position and remain there, but he returned to Nuremburg in the following year. A great admirer of Martin Luther, the friend of Pirkheimer and Melanchthon, and so drawn towards the party of the Reformers, he was yet a Churchman by temperament; and the religious feeling so beautifully expressed in his earlier work found its outlet later in allegory and symbolism of a rather melancholy cast. This is more evident in his engravings than in his paintings; but in the last year of his life he painted the *Four Apostles*, now in the Munich Gallery, of whom the St. John is said to be a portrait of Melanchthon, and the four, St. John, St. Peter, St. Mark, and St. Paul, have been supposed to represent the "Four Temperaments"—the melancholic, phlegmatic, sanguine, and choleric—of the mediæval philosophers; at any rate it is clear that Dürer's great interest in later life was the representation of character and the expression of temperament, and that he had lost the simple and unquestioning religious happiness that is expressed in his *Adoration of the Magi*. There is no other German painter who, so completely as Dürer, puts himself, his own feelings, his own joy and sorrow, into his work. Of the others, we know what they saw, for they record it very faithfully: of Dürer, we know what he felt.

His influence, both upon painters and engravers, was very great, and, although there is no conclusive evidence of any direct contact between him and Lucas Cranach (1492-1553), there can be no doubt that this very successful but very uneven painter was influenced by Dürer in his earlier years. He was born at Kronach, in Upper Franconia, and was the pupil of his father. His earlier works, mostly of religious subjects, have a great charm, being lively and natural in the attitude and expressions of the figures, and gay and rich in colour. His *Rest on the Flight*, at Berlin, is the finest example of this phase of his work, and, while it shows already his fondness for (and weakness in) the drawing of the human figure, it is full of vitality and enjoyment. He was, however, spoilt by a too great demand for his work, the pressure of



DURER
Adoration of the Magi
(German)

public appointments, and the demands of his position as Court Painter to three successive Electors of Saxony; and the spread of the Reformation in Germany drove him from the simplicity of religious painting to rather clumsy and dull allegory, mostly expressed in terms of the nude. His nude figures are ill-shapen, stiff, and awkward; and if we place his *Death of Lucretia*, at Munich, painted in 1524, side by side with the same subject, in the same gallery, by Albrecht Dürer, we can see at a glance the world of difference between the work of a competent but uninspired craftsman and that of an imaginative and sympathetic possessor of genius. The *Charity* by Cranach in the National Gallery, London (2925) is an excellent example of his later work of the allegorical kind.

However, we are bound to bear in mind the extremely difficult and cramping conditions imposed upon German painters by the religious changes and controversies of the 16th century. Not only is the contrast marked, between the liveliness of Cranach's earlier religious painting and the formality of his later allegory, but, when we look at the work of a much less famous German, Matthias Grünewald of Aschaffenburg (14?–1530), and see how lively and interesting a picture he can make of a group of saints in conversation, such as his *SS. Erasmus and Maurice*, at Munich, it is easy to realize that when the German was not cut off by circumstances on the one hand from the religious tradition out of which his art had grown, nor on the other, from his sympathetic interest in his fellow-men, he could be a very convincing painter, a fine colourist and a bold draughtsman. Indeed, it is probable that the sudden and startling rise to eminence of the German portrait-painters of the 16th century, such as Dürer, Hans Baldung Grün (c. 1478–1545) and Hans Holbein the Younger (1497–1543), was largely due to the fact that religious painting was forcibly brought to an end by the Reformation, so that they were obliged to concentrate the whole of their powers upon that side of painting towards which they and their predecessors had always had a natural leaning, namely, the rendering of individual character.

For the moment, we must return to the virtual founder of the Suabian School of German painters, Martin Schöngauer (1445–1491) who, like Dürer, was the son of a goldsmith. He was born at Augsburg, and became, about 1469, a citizen of Colmar, where he spent the greater part of his life, and died at Breisach. He was very greatly influenced by Rogier van der Weyden, and, in his *Nativity*, at Munich (174), there is even an echo of Robert Campin, van der Weyden's master, who was dead before Schöngauer was born. In tradition, therefore, he is wholly Flemish, but in engraving, of which he was a great master, we see much more plainly than in his painting the simple realism of the German, and more especially of the Suabian School. There is in his work none of the ascetic spirit which is so marked in Flemish painting. In his finest picture, *The Madonna in the Rose Bower*, at Colmar, it is true that the forms have not the soft roundness, nor has the expression of Our Lady the sentimental sweetness of Stephan Lochner's version of the same subject, but, despite a certain angularity which is derived from Flemish art, the picture is full of a very gentle spirit that is entirely free from sadness, and its colouring is rich and bold. Bartholomew Zeitblom of Ulm, who was working there between 1484 and 1578, is, in the same way, a follower rather than an imitator of Flemish art, and is chiefly interesting to us on account of the influence which he exercised upon Hans Holbein the Elder (c. 1460–1524), who was born in Augsburg. Whether through Zeitblom or Schöngauer, or directly, he also was influenced by Rogier van der Weyden, and most of his surviving works are definitely Flemish in style; but the most famous of all of them, the *Martyrdom of St. Sebastian*, at Munich, which was painted in 1515, displays definite traces of the influence of the Italian Renaissance side by side with a strong reminiscence of Memlinc. It has even been suggested on the strength of this picture, that Holbein had at some time visited Venice; it has also been supposed that it is very largely the work of his more famous son. There is no need, I think, for the former of these suppositions: the soft yet solid modelling, rich and

harmonious colour, and delicate landscape, with its truthful rendering of atmosphere and distance, are all quite within the scope of German observation and craft, and the vivid realism of the faces—the “portrait-instinct,” is much more German than Italian: but it is an extremely interesting example of the influence of Italian design and composition upon German temperament. Just as Dürer’s *Crucifixion* derived from Italian sources its decorative use of space, and at the same time used it to emphasize sentiment and pathos in true German fashion, so Hans Holbein’s *Martyrdom of St. Sebastian* uses an Italian composition, quite possibly derived from an engraving, for purely German ends.

That Italian influences were at work in Augsburg is evident from the work of Hans Burgkmair (1473–1531) which is strongly Italian both in design and drawing, although this brilliant engraver and interesting painter was a pupil of Martin Schöngauer. It was probably through Dürer that he came into contact with Venetian influences, which show their effect upon his work in a greater freedom of brushwork, softer colour, and more poetic rendering of character than were common to his fellow-painters in Augsburg. However that may be, his younger contemporary, Hans Holbein the Younger (1497–1543), was strong enough to put to his own uses, rather than to imitate, Italian methods of drawing and design in portraiture. Whether he was ever in Italy or not is uncertain, and if he was, the visit had no traceable effect upon his art. He was the pupil of his father, but moved from Augsburg to Basle in 1515, and there designed initial letters and title-pages for books. The famous series of wood engravings of *The Dance of Death* was executed during this period, but not published till many years later.

If Holbein had lived in different times he would have been one of the world’s greatest religious painters. In the presence of the glorious *Meyer Madonna* at Darmstadt (best known from the copy in the Dresden Gallery), we cannot but deplore the fate which made him almost wholly a portrait-painter living among foreigners. In this wonderful

picture, the German painter has made free use of the rich architectural forms of Italy of the Renaissance. His drawing is bold but pure, his grouping symmetrical but free, and, while he indulges to the full his native love and individual genius for portraiture, he has invested his quite ordinary people, who kneel about the feet of Our Lady, with an exquisite dignity, a quiet gravity, and a tender charm, which are wholly in accord with the statuesque splendour of the most glorious figure of the Mother standing in their midst. The clasped hands and upturned face of the praying man upon the left, the donor from whom the picture takes its name, Burgomaster Meyer of Basle, are the very expression of passionate gratitude; it is said the picture was a votive offering of thanksgiving for the restoration to health of a child at the point of death, and, by a strange fantasy of the artist (which shows that even in this painter of portraits famous for their unrelenting truthfulness, imaginative sentiment was ever-present, scarcely below the surface), it is the Child Christ that is languorous and ailing, while the infant in the foreground glows with happiness and health.

The colour of this picture is a feast of quiet splendour, its design majestic, and its spirit sublime in simplicity and tenderness. It shows us German art at a height touched by no other artist save Dürer, the height at which imagination becomes mysticism, and realism gives visible form to faith.

But in 1526 the Reformers drove art out of the service of religion, and Holbein, armed with a letter from Erasmus—who also was obliged to leave Basle—to Sir Thomas More, went to England in search of work in more peaceful conditions. He returned to Basle in 1528, but three years later was back in England, where he remained, save for occasional journeys to Brussels and France upon King Henry's business, and a short visit to Basle in 1538, and it was in England that he died in 1543.

When we remember that during the last twelve years of his life Holbein was mainly employed in painting portraits in England, first during his visit to Sir Thomas

More, then, from 1531, for the German merchants of the Steelyard in London, and finally, from 1536 to 1543, as Court Painter to Henry VIII, it is rather surprising that there should be only two works to represent him in the National Gallery, London. Of these, the earlier is **The Ambassadors*, painted in 1533; it represents Jean de Dinteville, Sieur de Polisy, and Georges de Selve, later Bishop of Lavaur, standing on either side of a large table of two tiers. This table is crowded with various mathematical, astronomical, and other instruments, and books, representing the varied interests and studies of the two persons represented, and in the foreground is a drawing of a human skull, so strangely distorted that for many years it was an unsolved puzzle. The portraits are easy, natural and dignified, and the drawing of all the objects in the picture is minutely accurate, but not laboured; but its colour is its chief beauty, for though there are many different stuffs and furs, and metal and wood and ivory, brought together in what might have been, in less skilful hands, a spotty jumble, the picture as a whole is quiet, harmonious and rich in tone. It was painted in London for the Sieur de Polisy, who took it to France, and it did not come back to England till 1795.

The other National Gallery portrait is that of **Christina of Denmark, Duchess of Milan*, which was painted in Brussels in 1538 at the orders of King Henry VIII, who was for the moment a widower in search of a wife. The sombre garb of the widow gave little scope to the master of rich colour, but he has made of it a wonderful foil for the delicate, dimpled face, and the dainty hands of the wise young lady of fifteen who avoided the perilous honour of becoming Henry's fourth consort. The hands, especially, in this picture, are delightfully drawn and modelled, and in its simplicity—it was painted from a sketch (now lost) made in three hours—it shows Holbein's marvellous power of grasping at once the essentials of a personality and putting them on canvas without any elaboration to distract the eye.

Very different is the **Portrait of Henry VIII* in the collection of Earl Spencer. This picture is brilliant in

colouring, and precise in detail, and the features are modelled with remarkable minuteness. It is a masterly piece of craftsmanship, but unsympathetic and rather lacking in character, in fact, a typical state portrait. It is work like this which makes us regret that Holbein had to expend his genius to such an extent upon portraits of people not of his own race, for even the much more imaginative and interesting *Portrait of Sir Brian Tuke*, in the Munich Gallery, with the grim figure of death pointing to the hour-glass between the subject's hands, has none of the spontaneous charm of the **Portrait of Georg Gisze*, a merchant of the German Steelyard in London, which is now at Berlin. Here again, as in the *Ambassadors*, the picture is crowded with accessories, and yet the young man, seen at half-length in his striking costume with its rose-coloured sleeves, stands out, among the papers and various odds and ends of his business, as a living and interesting personality; for here Holbein was painting a fellow-countryman of his own class, and all his sympathies were awake.

It was, however, Holbein's accuracy in setting down a likeness upon which his reputation in England was based, and this was what his followers in England sought to imitate: thus, though he was in a sense the father of English painting, the imaginative side of his work, and his great mastery of colour, produced little effect in this country. It was as a German artist that he was truly great, the first and only German painter to use the lessons of the Renaissance with absolute command for purposes of his own, the last among them to give expression to their deep, but very human, religious sentiment.

Broadly speaking, the sentimentality which was the chief danger that threatened the earlier German painters was converted, in the case of the two greatest Germans, into mysticism—the suggestion of a hidden meaning, an underlying spirituality—in the work of Dürer, and into an intense human interest in the work of Holbein: but in the case of a third German, not indeed to be ranked with these, yet, in his own way an artist of astonishing power,



HOLBEIN
Georg Gisze
(German)

it found a very different outlet. Albrecht Altdorfer (1480-1535) was a landscape painter of a very high order indeed, at a time when landscape painting, except in Venice, was in its infancy; and his outlook is so far in advance of his age, that it cannot possibly be explained upon any other ground than that of inborn genius. It is true that, before his time, the Flemish painters had already arrived at a great height of skill in the use of landscape backgrounds in their religious pictures, and one at least among them, Joachim Patinir (1485-1529) was to all intents and purposes purely a landscape painter, for he was largely employed in providing backgrounds for the figure-work of other artists; and he displays a remarkably fine sense of pattern, that is, of the "accidental composition" of natural scenery by the counterbalance of masses of dark and light. The German painter looked at landscape in a very different, and a wholly original way. It is quite plain that neither Venetian nor Flemish influence was at work in the formation of his style, but only simple love of natural beauty. When he painted, he was thinking, not how he could subdue nature to a colour-scheme, as Titian was doing, nor how to use his minute observation of natural forms to make a delicately graduated groundwork for a pictorial design, in the Flemish fashion, but of how he might best use his art to set down beauty as he saw it in his own German countryside. As none before him, he painted light and air and huge distances. His skies drift in tender blue and fleecy white beyond his fading mountains. The castle-crowned hills in mid-distance are happy hunting-grounds of romance, and yet so clearly seen, that romance becomes reality: and in the foreground, the tall dark trees are painted, bole and branch, twig and leaf, with an understanding love that we shall not meet again till we come to the work of the great Dutchmen, Ruysdael and Hobbema, a century and a half later, and to that of the Englishman Crome, after yet another hundred years: and his sunsets glow like those that Turner saw.

Architect as well as painter, he loved lordly buildings, painted stone for stone, yet with a fantasy that seems to

tell us these were buildings of his dreams, buildings that he could never hope to build in his native city of Ratisbon, where he was at once city architect (Baumeister) and councillor. Prosperous, and surrounded by beautiful possessions, he loved to paint luxury of robes and gold and silver plate and jewels. Living a full and interesting life, he loved to fill his pictures with figures, and to tell a human story, acted in its natural and appropriate setting. The strange mixture of literal vision, and swaggering, sweeping design in his **Poverty and Riches*, in the Berlin Museum, affords us an example of his marvellous power as a composer, both in colour and design. The great curve of the crimson robes of the rich man and his wife, full in the foreground, is carried on by the curving parapet of the palace wall beyond, and is echoed again and again in the distant landscape of glowing green and gold. The blue haze of the furthest mountains and the tender sky throw up the warmly sunlit palace with its minute detail of masonry; and the splendid figure of the host, standing with a great golden cup uplifted in his hand, upon the steps, to welcome his noble guests, puts the finishing touch to this tale of princely luxury. And to one side, huddled upon the very train of splendid wealth, the beggar and his family crouch in the full sunshine midway between the palace and the dark and solemn wood.

It would have been possible to describe this picture in purely technical language, for it is one into which the artist has put patience and thought and skill: but the thing that matters here is the spirit of the thing, that lies midway between the mysticism of Dürer (by whom Altdorfer was greatly influenced) and the human curiosity and lively interest of Holbein; it is a purely Teutonic spirit, which reads into the beauty of nature a sympathy with human feelings, and makes landscape a part of human life.

Here our consideration of German art must end; for with Dürer and Altdorfer dead, and Holbein in a foreign land, there were no great painters to keep the German tradition alive. The landscape school of Altdorfer was

but feebly carried on by such painters as his pupil Michael Ostendorfer (*d.* 1559), and Italian influence increased rapidly, so that German painters became mere imitators of Titian and Tintoretto, many of them working for long periods in Italy: among these the most worthy of note is Adam Elsheimer (1578-1620), who spent the last twenty years of his life in Rome; he was greatly influenced, while in Venice, by Johann Rottenhamner (1564-1623), who was a follower of Tintoretto, and he was very fond of strange effects of light. His work is highly imaginative, and shows, in spite of its Italianized character, a strong German strain of sentimentality and romance; and, of the German painters of the 17th century, the great majority found both their training and their employment in Holland; but, while German painting as a distinct school thus practically ceased to exist, the German character is constantly revealed by a tendency in the direction of sentimental interest, quite distinct from the artificial prettiness of late Italian painting on the one hand, and the robust materialism of Dutch art on the other.

CHAPTER V

THE DUTCH SCHOOL

THE struggle for religious and political liberty, which had ended in the surrender of Flanders, the "obedient province," to the mastery of Spain, was carried by the Dutch, through much tribulation, to a successful issue ; and thereafter, the rising prosperity of Holland gave both inspiration and employment to a host of competent painters, with here and there an outstanding genius to raise the school above its natural level of mere domestic illustration. If we may say, broadly, that the art of Italy is the art of religion and literature, that of Spain the art of the Court, of France, that of the Academy, of England, that of the aristocracy, the art of Holland may be described as that of the middle class, a class whose highest ambition was municipal distinction, and whose highest good was material prosperity, in the matter of good food and drink, good houses and good clothes.

The adherence of Holland to the reformed religion was an article not only of religious but of political faith, and was indeed the rock upon which her national independence was founded ; and this fact cut Holland clean away from all Italian and even Flemish influence, and more than this, ruled religious subjects, or more correctly, Christian subjects, out of the painter's category. The absence of a Court deprived him of that width of experience which comes from familiarity with great collections of masterpieces, like those of the Kings of Spain and France and England, and of the restrained splendour of an aristocratic society : and on the other hand, the individual prosperity of a nation of traders and burghers gave him a house-proud public eager to adorn the walls of their houses with portraits, and with pictures of every conceivable thing that interested or amused or flattered them, irrespective of whether those things were beautiful or not. Evelyn, in his diary, tells how in the Dutch market-places he saw barrows loaded with pictures of all kinds, finding a ready sale ; and perhaps it would not be too much to say that the 17th-century

Dutch were the first domestic picture collectors in the history of European art.

To the Dutch picture buyer, subject came first, and next to it craftsmanship. He bought a picture because he liked the thing, the person, or the place or the incident that it represented, and he liked to get something "well done" for his money. Therefore, Dutch pictures present an immense variety of subject, and the general level of craftsmanship is very high. Moreover, the representation of every kind of material, from silver to fur, and from lace to stone, is minutely truthful, and there is a large group of painters whose whole reputation depended upon the microscopic character of their painting. Being intended for the walls of private houses in towns, Dutch pictures were seldom very large, and many were very small indeed; consequently, painters had little need of a decorative feeling, for their pictures were intended to be looked at separately and often very closely. For the same reason, noble, imaginative and heroic subjects were little in demand, for such pictures are not "easy to live with"; on the other hand, humour, sometimes of a very coarse, and often of a very trivial kind, comes into painting almost for the first time since the miniatures of the Middle Ages, in 17th-century Holland.

The larger Dutch pictures are for the most part portrait groups, painted for the board-rooms of trade-guilds, and very dull affairs many of them are. The only other pictures of considerable size are landscapes, and of these the majority are "portraits of places" whose interest to their owners was probably quite as much sentimental as artistic: but here at least there was in the Dutchman an ennobling quality, which gave to his taste in landscape painting just that spark of imagination which makes for the perception of beauty. His patriotism was intense, and he loved the country that he had won from the Spaniard and from the sea with a love that was the only exalted passion of his existence; and so, in landscape painting, he was capable of romantic feeling, not only as a painter but as a buyer of pictures: and this feeling extended not only to country

landscape, but also to pictures of his towns—as for example Berck-Heyde painted Haarlem—and to pictures of the sea, whereof the Dutch navy, the first efficient national navy on a permanent footing since that of Venice, was disputing the mastery with Spain, France and England in turn.

It would seem, from this account, that there was little scope for greatness in the majority of Dutch painting: and indeed it has often been disputed, whether the painters of Holland, who devoted themselves to the portrayal of scenes of common life in taverns and streets, of the domestic scenes of daily employment, and of the silks and velvets of prosperous burghers' wives, have any claim to be called great: but if we look at it in this way:—that the painter who, both by inclination and necessity, paints common things, and yet can put into his rendering of them a beauty which did not exist till he saw it and set it down, actually creates beauty, and adds to the enjoyment of those common things for those who can grasp his intention—then, we can truly say that he is great, and that his work is doing good, by awakening the sense of beauty in others who, but for him, would never have looked beyond the actual interest of the things themselves. Moreover, the Dutch painter's interest in the things he painted was bound to be of the closest kind, for his patrons demanded that he should set down everything accurately; and this led, indirectly, to his taking his place among the most convincing portrait-painters in the world, for by his very accuracy he delineated character with the most intimate truth; because humour and sympathy help a man to understand what he sees in a human face, he learned to use these qualities, and so to put upon his canvas living people, young and old, beautiful and ugly, but all interesting just because they are so very much alive. Those most difficult of all subjects, little children, never come amiss to him, and when, for example, van Miereveld (1567–1641) painted the delightful **Portrait of a Child with a Parrot*, with a minute and loving attention to the last thread of the lace ruff and cap, and of the stiff grey-green brocade, with its flowered pattern, of the elaborate costume, in a manner that reminds us of the

exquisite craft of the Flemish painters of a century before, it is easy to see that he has brought to his task a less imaginative but far more intimately human attitude of mind towards the child himself: and there is keen humour and understanding in the way in which he has painted the smiling roguish face, as though he and the small boy were enjoying between them the huge joke of all this elaborate dressing-up and solemn make-believe magnificence.

In other words, the Dutchman used all his craft to please his patrons, and all his sense of beauty and humanity to please himself; and consequently, though probably without knowing it, he was impressing his own personality, his own outlook upon life, upon every picture that he painted.

The only possible way of treating in a small book the vast mass of material which Dutch painting presents, is to choose here and there an outstanding figure to represent a whole class of painters. Necessarily, those whom we shall choose stand out mainly because they are different in some subtle way from their fellows, but at least we may take it that they exemplify the aims of Dutch painting, even though they surpass the mass of its achievement.

Among portrait-painters pure and simple one figure stands supreme and unchallenged, and that is Franz Hals (1581-1666). Even Rembrandt, so much greater in many ways, cannot vie with him in uncompromising brilliance of characterization, for Rembrandt, as a portrait-painter, complicated his task by his moody and penetrative imagination, while Hals approached his subject with a half-humorous, half-cynical, and wholly dashing impetuosity which gave him no scope for much study of its spiritual problems. He did not paint the soul of his subjects, as it appealed to his own soul, but expressed his own opinion of their appearance and bearing in unmistakable terms. He was born at Antwerp, and may have studied under van Noort, Rubens' master; but nothing certain is known of him till we find him, at the age of about thirty, working in Haarlem. His method of painting, by building up the structure of the face in disconnected patches of shadow, and then, at a last sitting of rapid work, binding the whole

together by putting in the lights, and the smallest and deepest shadows, probably took long to bring to perfection, and his early obscurity may well be due to this slow maturing of his art. It was entirely his own method, with no tradition of any kind behind it ; but it is easy to see that it was the only method by which he could achieve his aim of representing the instantaneous, almost fleeting expression, which is the compelling charm of his work. He is best known by his single-figure portraits, generally of not more than half-length, and of these the famous **Laughing Cavalier* is a superb example, though its title ill describes the insolent sneer on the lips of this magnificent but thoroughly unpleasant young man. Insolence, indeed, is the keynote of the whole of this picture, both in spirit and in method of execution. The glittering embroidery on the sleeve is flicked on—there is no other word for it—in dashes of rich paint over the wonderfully varied blacks and greys of the sleeve : the narrowed eyes are half a dozen touches—inspired touches—of paint, and the cock of the great black hat has been swept in at a finishing stroke, as though Hals had said, “It’s finished ; put your hat on,” and had suited the action to the word on the portrait itself.

In portrait groups, however, he is scarcely to be surpassed, for his sense of balance is unerring, and his grouped figures never lose freedom of movement or individual importance. This is well seen in his *Assembly of the Officers of the Arquebusiers of St. Adriaen*, at Haarlem. If it has a fault, it is that the central standing figure tends to cut it in half ; but the lively movement of the figures, and variety of character-interest in the faces, counteract this effect to a very great extent : and his large **Family Group* (N.G. 2285) with its marvellous control of black and greys, and vivid human interest (we may note especially the nurse in the background, the beautiful woman on the right, holding an orange, and the impudent little girl with an apple) is a most difficult—and probably wearisome—task carried to a triumphant conclusion. Underlying all his work, however, there is a note of brutality. All his subjects smile, but their smile is seldom pleasant. It is sometimes smug, some-

times cynical, sometimes even silly, and in it, we feel that the personality of the melancholy man, poverty-stricken, at odds with the prosperous world that employed him, and seeking refuge in coarse dissipation, is sneering at us as he sneered at his sitters ; it is only when he painted children that we can feel that he answered their smile with one of his own.

Like him, Rembrandt saw the world through the spectacles of his own mood ; but while Hals never varied his point of view, Rembrandt was as various as the fortunes that befell him. The story of his art is the story of his life, with all its ups and downs.

Rembrandt van Rijn (1606-1666) was the son of a well-to-do miller and was born at Leyden. He received his first training under Pieter Lastman of Amsterdam, who had studied in Italy, and from him he derived his first interest in strong effects of light and shade. For several years he studied at home, using etching as a rapid and easy means of practising the drawing of the varied expressions of the human face, and at length in 1627 began to practise as an oil-painter. By the following year he already had pupils, among them Gerard Dou, to whom we shall return later : and in 1631 he removed to Amsterdam, where he settled for the rest of his life.

In 1634 he married Saskia van Uylenborch, through whose social position he obtained many commissions for portraits. Some of his most delightful early works—such as *The Jewish Bride*, and the *Portrait of Saskia*, at Cassel, represent his wife, and to this period also belong many portraits of himself, among them that in the Pitti Gallery ; and that in the National Gallery, London (672), is a little later, but still during his prosperous married life (1642).

Another striking work of this period is the **Knight in Armour*, at Glasgow, which shows in a marked degree the quality, so rare in Dutch art, of imagination. The Knight is a half-length figure standing against a dark architectural background, and is but dimly lighted save where a gleam falls upon his high-combed, gilded helmet and steel breast-piece, throws into strong relief the lower part of his face,

and just touches the shoulder of his great red cloak, which sinks into the shadow of the lower part of the picture. Though there is nothing unnatural, or even particularly remarkable, about the light or about the objects upon which it falls, the picture conveys an impression of mystery and of hidden splendour: and this is the result of that quality in the painter, so rare among his fellows, of imagination. In the early days of prosperity and happiness, Rembrandt had a luxuriant imagination, which made him quick to seize upon the dramatic and emotional effect of strong contrasts of light and shade and of rich colour glowing through obscurity. His studio was crowded with armour and rich stuffs and fantastic costumes, and without any knowledge of strange lands, and with no literary inspiration save that of the Bible, he lived in a world of his own imagining, in which he found romance that expressed itself, not only in subject pictures and in portraits of himself and his wife, but in the portraits of his solid, commonplace sitters, and even in official portrait-groups. Such a portrait-group is the famous *Lesson in Anatomy* in the Mauritshuis at the Hague, painted in 1632 (?1634), almost immediately after his arrival in Amsterdam. It is not a dull group of a doctor and his pupils, as it might have been, but a startling and dramatic representation of a group of earnest students of anatomy, bending over the dead man who lies in full light against their dark figures, while the lecturer, with a muscle of the dissected forearm between his scissors, explains to them this human structure with a quiet composure in strong contrast to the lively interest of his listeners.

From the very first—Rembrandt was still in his twenties when he painted this great picture, so masterly in handling and so full of life—the painter's aim went deep below the surface of his subject. He painted, not merely faces, but minds, thoughts, souls of men and women. Himself easy-going, generous, weak, and not a little vain, he had a strange power of penetrating the inner personality of those he painted. There is a portrait in the National Gallery, London (N.G. 1675), of an old lady, that belongs to this early



REMBRANDT
The Young Jewess
(Dutch)

time. It glows with golden light against its dark background, but the tired, ugly old face gazes out at us with disillusioned suspicious eyes, and the mouth is twisted into the wry ghost of an unwilling smile. She was doubtless a prosperous old lady, but we can but be sorry for her : it is no guess to say, standing before her portrait, that her life was spoiled by selfishness. Rembrandt was a little merciless when he was young and prosperous.

But in 1642, misfortune fell upon him in twofold fashion. His beloved wife died, and in the same year he mortally offended his Amsterdam patrons by letting his imagination run away with him. He had been commissioned to paint a military group of *The Night Watch*, and instead of painting, as he was expected to paint, a solemn group of portraits, he painted a superb picture in which the glimmering light flickers and dances in and out of a great mass of moving figures, of whom two are resplendent in the full glow of light, but many are almost lost in the shadows of the background. Because all had subscribed to have their portraits well and truly painted, those whom Rembrandt had relegated to the shadow were furious and the Company refused to take the picture. Already shaken by sorrow, Rembrandt, in anger and disappointment at this crude lack of appreciation and understanding, broke down, and fell into evil ways, and, within a few years, his fortune and that of his wife, which she had left in trust to their son Titus, were spent ; during these dark days, Rembrandt turned much to religious painting, and it is in the small Biblical subjects of this period—between 1642 and 1649—that we get perhaps the deepest insight of all into his wonderful perception of the spiritual beauty in common things. His *Adoration of the Shepherds* is simply a little picture of a group of rough folk in a great lofty dark stable. In the foreground a standing figure holds a lantern, from which little gleams of light swing along the floor and faintly reveal the rafters overhead : and on the left half a dozen figures stand or kneel around a glowing pool of light, before the crouching figure of the Mother and her Babe. It is only a lantern,

hidden from us by the kneeling worshippers, but instantly we feel that the glow is the symbol of the Divine Presence. It is all so simple and so natural that it might have happened to ourselves, and yet we know it for a miracle. In this period, too, Rembrandt turned to nature, and painted some of his most wonderful landscapes, in which a stray gleam of light makes some common object—like the tree in **The Stone Bridge* (Amsterdam, Rijks Museum)—stand out in sudden glory against a lowering sky. In all this work, the beauty is rather that of romance than of colour or of form. He showed familiar scenes, not as those who knew them saw them every day, but as they might see them once in a lifetime, if nature's mood and theirs chanced to be for a moment in perfect harmony.

In 1649 a new happiness came into his life with his love for Hendrikje Stöffels, who, though she was neither well-born nor very beautiful, gave a new grace and charm to his work. He painted many portraits of her, in more restrained colour and suffused with softer light than the pictures of his earliest days, and, for lack of commissioned portraits, he painted also many "subject portraits" from models, making one model play many parts upon his canvas. In these, it is easy to see that his outlook upon his fellow-men is more kindly, more sympathetically tolerant than it had been: and though he no longer possessed the glowing brilliance of his youthful light and colour, the gentler light and sombre hues have a greater dignity. At this point his technical powers were at their very height. In spite of bankruptcy in 1656, he struggled bravely on, loyally aided by Hendrikje, and by his young son Titus, who between them ran a kind of art-shop to help him to a living: and in 1661 he obtained a commission to paint a portrait group of the *Syndics of the Drapers*. This picture is far more orthodox in treatment than either the *Lesson in Anatomy* or *The Night Watch*—Rembrandt had perhaps learned wisdom through adversity—but it surpasses both of them in its poetic balance of forms, its marvellous rendering of soft interior light, and in extraordinary subtlety in the rendering of character.

Each personality stands out individually, whether he be harsh or gentle, commonplace or commanding, coarse or cultured; none gives way to any other, and yet all are bound together in a perfect unity of quiet warm colour and balanced design.

But in the same year death took Hendrikje from him, and soon his sight began to fail. His drawing becomes uncertain, and his brush falters, though to the end he produced from time to time portraits of astonishing vitality, and of ever-increasing sympathy. In old age as in youth, he still painted many portraits of himself, and in these we may see the same tired eyes, the same wry, disillusioned smile, and the same indomitable spirit that he had given so long ago to the old lady for whose sadness he had shown so little tolerance. When, in 1668, his son Titus died, leaving a young wife and a daughter yet unborn, the old painter lived only to see the christening of his grandchild, and then died, scarcely missed by his own generation, that had made so little use of him.

Of his pupils, only Nicolas Maes (1632-1693) seems to have learned from him much more than the mere craft of painting: but Maes, in his earlier years at any rate, had some understanding of the dramatic value of strong light and shadow, though none of his master's imaginative power in its use. His **Spinning Wheel*, at Amsterdam, or his *Idle Servant*, in the National Gallery, London (207), show that while he relied mainly upon the domestic subject-interest in his pictures, he had a keen eye for the movement of soft interior light and for restrained colour: but we have only to set such works as these beside Rembrandt's **Sweeping Girl*, in the Hermitage, to realize that while Rembrandt had genius, Maes had no more than a pleasant faculty for finding the beautiful aspect of commonplace things.

Yet the Dutchman's complacent contentment with his own surroundings was a very real and deep sentiment, and it moved many painters, and inspired at least three, to find and to record the beauty of them. Of these three, each shows us a different aspect of Dutch life, Terborch (1617-1681) that of people of wealth and refinement, with the

best clothes, the best houses, and the best manners in Holland. His ladies are richly dressed in silks and satin, velvets and furs. They are quiet, dignified, and if not dainty at least stately and well-proportioned. His colours are rich and glowing, his backgrounds cool and shadowy, or filled with quiet grey light. In **The Concert*, at Berlin, a lady in a scarlet velvet bodice and white satin skirt and a brown fur about her shoulders, is seated with her back to us, playing upon a violoncello, and in the corner of the room, close against the golden-grey wall, another, with a white kerchief about her head, plays upon a harpsichord. It is a very quiet picture, and if the invisible face of the 'cellist is as beautiful as her fair braided hair and the delicate curve of her neck, she is very beautiful indeed. The faces of the ladies in **The Letter* (H.M. the King) are not beautiful, but there is great charm in the simplicity of their pose, and again the exquisite rendering of white satin, this time against a background of rich brown in deep shadow, of the black velvet jacket edged with white fur of the seated woman, and of the royal blue bodice of the standing figure, gives an impression of unostentatious luxury which reminds us for a moment of the great master of so long ago, Jan van Eyck, in his portrait of John Arnolfini and his wife.

Far different is the source of the inspiration of Pieter de Hooch (1629-? 32-1681). For him, all things were beautiful so long as the rich sunlight of golden afternoon might fall upon them. His **Court of a Dutch House*, in the National Gallery, London, is nothing but an accurate picture of a backyard in Delft, dust-bin and pail and broom and all, and apart from the fact that the picture as a whole is a very beautiful rectangular composition, the sunshine, and the glow that it gives to all the colour, is its only reason: but that is reason enough in all conscience. It is an object-lesson in gratitude, that God's sunshine should make man's plainest handiwork so beautiful, so restful, so jewel-like in colour: and when de Hooch, in later life, departed from these simple scenes, and, perhaps in emulation of Terborch, painted more sumptuous subjects, great rooms with marble

pavements and the like, he lost this joy of sunshine, and became almost dull.

The third of this group of painters is also the greatest, for he adds to the refinement of Terborch and the simplicity of de Hooch, an indefinable and indescribable spirit of poetry which no other Dutch painter ever knew. This is Jan Vermeer of Delft (1632-1675), than whom no painter in the world more exquisitely rendered the quiet light of morning or grey afternoon, filling grey-walled rooms with its own quietude. No painter ever had a more delicate, a more subtle sense of tone, that pervading, unifying quality of light that makes all colours kin and kind to one another. His pictures are rare, for he lived but a little time, and he was a slow and painstaking worker ; and, moreover, many of them were lost in shipwreck on their way to Russia not long after his untimely death : and they are almost monotonous in their repetition of the same theme, a girl standing near a window, a curtain, a rich Oriental carpet used as a table cover or bedspread, and then just light. This light is never strong, and there are no violent contrasts of light and shade : but it creeps everywhere, even into the deepest shadows, and rests upon a bodice of yellow, as in **The Pearl Necklace*, at Berlin, or upon a tall green curtain, as in **A Girl Reading a Letter* (Dresden), and, neither intense nor glowing, but cold and grey, yet it produces a feeling in our minds of restfulness and peace and exquisite tenderness. Vermeer is the poet among Dutch painters, a poet among all the painters in the world.

A painter who approached Vermeer in physical, and Rembrandt in mental vision, was Karel Fabritius (1614-1654). His **Goldfinch* (Hague, Mauritzhuis) is an exquisitely restrained exercise in the handling of soft light and subdued colour, while in his portraits he displays remarkable subtlety both in command of tone and rendering of character. His death at the age of thirty in the great explosion at Delft probably robbed Dutch art of a figure of the first importance.

Beside such painters the admirable craftsman Gerard Dou (1613-1675), with his tiny pictures in which every

scale of a herring is painted with the same microscopic accuracy as the wrinkles of the old woman who holds it up by the tail (the **Herring Seller*, Hermitage collection), seems dull and unimportant. Yet though the pure craft of painting could scarcely be carried further, there is great beauty in the rendering of forms in deep shadow, and the colour is pure and truly balanced. He was a "little master," but nevertheless he possesses a certain strength and dignity of his own: and his pupil Gabriel Metsu (1630-1667), though he had greater breadth of handling, and more variety of subject, never surpassed him in these qualities. Though in Metsu's **Sportsman's Present*, at Amsterdam, we see almost the same perfection in the minute rendering of the feathers of the dead mallard in the foreground as that of the pheasant in Dou's *Poulterer's Shop*, in the National Gallery, London (825), there is a looseness in composition and a patchiness in the distribution of colour which set him far below Dou in this particular group of painters. Jan Steen (1626-1679), the brewer's son, traveller, taverner, and painter of tavern scenes and lively incidents of familiar domestic life, was a greater painter than either of them, for his work has the charm of real personal enjoyment, and the quick observation of essentials which betokens an active mind. Nothing could be more natural and full of varied interest than his **Feast of St. Nicholas* (Christmas Day), at Amsterdam, in which the baby, the two-year-old spoilt darling, stands loaded with presents in the midst of the family, coaxed by grandmother to come and have yet more good things lavished upon her, while a big boy blubbers in the background, with his knuckles in his eye, because a birch rod is all that is in his Christmas shoe, and his brother and sister jeer at him with a painful but wholly childlike lack of sympathy. Steen's colour is as a rule clear without being gaudy, and he envelops it in a pleasant greyish-golden light. His composition is well balanced, but occasionally a little spotty in its distribution of dark and light masses; and his drawing is freer and livelier than that of any other of the small genre painters.

We cannot linger over the work of the great class of Dutch



JAN VERMEER
The Cook
(Dutch)

painters of still-life, though among these are some great masters of pure composition and of the rendering of textures of every description: and among the many landscape painters of Holland there are but four whom we can stay to name. These are Jan van Goyen (1596-1656), Jakob van Ruysdael (1628-1682), Aelbert Cuyp (1620-1691), and Meindert Hobbema (1638-1709). A link between van Goyen and Ruysdael was Salaman Ruysdael, the pupil of the former and uncle of the latter.

Jan van Goyen (who was the master of Jan Steen) was entirely self-taught, and seems to have owed nothing to the influence of Flemish landscape painters. He did not so much paint landscape as he saw it, as translate it into the reflection of his own mood, which was sober and restrained, even cold, but never gloomy. While he paid great attention to the drawing of natural forms, even such rapidly changing forms as those of the waves of an angry sea, he reduced all his colour to a narrow range of greys, browns and yellows, with scarcely more than a suggestion of green, so that many of his landscapes look almost as though they were painted in monochrome. His works are always small, yet he had a great power of rendering space and distance. His *River Scene*, in the National Gallery, London (151), affords a good example of his style. Salaman Ruysdael followed him very closely, but, while still keeping to quiet tones, had a wider range of colour and greater skill in the rendering of movement in atmosphere. His handling of paint is bold and free, and some of his smaller landscapes have a surprisingly modern appearance at first sight.

Aelbert Cuyp was born at Dordrecht (Dort) and derived his inspiration and many of his subjects from his native town and its surrounding pastures. He is the first landscape painter to make us realize that it is in the flat countries that the beauty of landscape is most easily to be seen, and is most inspiring to a painter. As a matter of fact, almost all the world's greatest landscape painters have been natives of flat countries, and, as we have seen, the painting of landscape for its own sake originated in the Netherlands, and scarcely spread beyond them till the 18th century.

Cuyp's pictures explain the reason of it, for in his pictures of Dort, with its houses and spires dreaming in their veil of golden light, his pastures stretching away into far distance, his cattle, dominating by sheer bulk and strength of colour the wide, even spaces around them, and yet not so much filling the picture, as forming a starting-point for our range of vision, it is made plain that *space* is an essential of landscape beauty, space for the movement of light, for the infinite change of the illimitable expanse of sky. All Cuyp's landscapes, with their figures and their horses and cattle and their distant masses of tall buildings, are no more than a setting for the movement of golden light. While de Hooch and Vermeer painted captured light in the narrow spaces of courts and rooms, Cuyp painted it in its freedom and variety; and because he did this so supremely well, we are inclined to forget that he was a skilful painter of portraits, of still-life and of interiors as well. Because there are cattle in his fields, he has been called a cattle-painter; but his great *View of Dort*, in the National Gallery, London (961), is enough to show him as a painter of the beauty of light and air, more than the equal of Claude le Lorrain, and the forerunner of Turner.

Jakob van Ruysdael (1630-1682) was a landscape painter of a very different kind. He was not content to take nature as he found her in his native country, and indeed we know very little about his training or the sources of his inspiration. He was born in Haarlem, and died there, but it seems almost certain that he must have visited Norway, for very many of his pictures represent mountain torrents, great crags and dark pine-trees, such as he could never have seen in Holland. There is a straining after dramatic effect in his work of this kind which gives it an air of artificiality, a kind of false picturesqueness, quite different from the happy serenity of Cuyp's work; and this is apparent also, though in a less degree, in his pictures of park-like scenery, with remarkably faithful rendering of tree-forms, such as **The Chase*, at Dresden, and the similar subject in the National Gallery, London (854). In all his work there is a touch of gloom, and though his pictures vary greatly in size, some being



very large and others almost miniatures, all of them seem to aim at a grandiose effect, with sombre colour and stormy skies ; but in his scenes of Holland, there is often greater tenderness, and a nearer approach to simplicity, than in his carefully composed subjects of a more dramatic kind.

Of Meindert Hobbema's life we know practically nothing, but his painting has had perhaps more direct influence upon English landscape art than that of any other painter. He painted woodland scenes, and villages among the trees, and glimpses of sunlit meadows seen between the oaks and willows. The broken water scattered by a water-wheel, and the drift of summer clouds across the blue sky, afford the greater part of the movement in his pictures. He tells no story, and expresses no mood, but paints the green and blue and grey of the country-side, and the dark shadows of the trees upon the grass, for their own sake. His greatest picture, the **Avenue at Middelbarnis*, hangs in the National Gallery, London (830), and from it we may learn how life-long love and study of a flat, unpicturesque country like Holland is the most wonderful training in the understanding of the fleeting beauty of nature that a man can have. There is nothing obviously beautiful in a straight road running across a perfectly flat country intersected at right angles to the road by dykes. There is nothing picturesque about the avenue of shorn and tufted poplars that stands like a pair of long rows of mops on either side. The only things that break the horizon are the tower of a church standing in a clump of trees, and the red roof of a farmhouse, but the picture is not only beautiful, it is unforgettable : and this is not because of the silvery light in which its quiet greens and greys are enveloped, though this is beautiful. It is because there run, diagonally across the stiff rectangular design of the trees and the road and the fields like the squares of a chessboard, two bold diverging lines of movement, which the eyes are made almost unconsciously to follow. They start from a tiny red roof in the middle distance on the left. The one mounts thence to the summit of the spire, thence to the top of a poplar bending

in the breeze, and onward across a great white cloud to the open patch of blue beyond : and the other chases a flying patch of sunshine across the fields, touches the figure of the man who walks towards us along the road, and the corner of the dyke on the right, and loses itself in the shadows of the garden where a man is pruning his stiff little standard trees. It is the swiftness and freedom of this movement across the rigid pattern of the landscape that fills it with air and life, and makes it one of the greatest landscapes in the world.

Dutch life was simple, with simple and material aims. The kinds of beauty that served the needs of religion and the Court in other lands were a closed book to the artists of Holland ; but men must have beauty, and so they found it where they could, in the land and the life they loved, and fashioned beauty out of such unpromising material as smug and comfortable citizens, poulterers' shops, flat fields and the streets of busy yet placid towns. No one had found much beauty in these things before, and so the world was richer for their discoveries.

CHAPTER VI

THE SPANISH SCHOOL

THE history of Painting in Spain differed from that of any other country in a peculiar way ; for, while in Italy, Germany, and the Low Countries, painting served a popular need, and grew up of its own accord out of that need, in Spain there was no popular demand for pictures.

This was due to the Spanish character, which is very literal and practical. A picture is a flat representation of things that are not flat, and the ordinary Spanish mind could not get over the untruthfulness of this way of representing things. The clumsiest piece of sculpture in the round was more convincing to a Spaniard than the most beautiful drawing ; and therefore pictures in churches and public buildings were not the useful and even necessary things in Spain that they were in Italy or Germany or Flanders.

Also, the climate of Spain had a good deal to do with it : no one who visits Spain can fail to be struck by the fact that all the natural colouring of the country is brown, almost red-brown, varied only by tones of black and grey, and that the sunlight is of a colourless, almost silvery tone ; consequently the people as a whole have very little understanding of rich colour, and will put violent scarlets and magentas and yellows together without feeling any pain in their colour-sense. Blue, the cool, quiet colour, is one which Spaniards very seldom use, and even when great painters did arise in Spain, their use of this colour is very sparing, and they generally seem to regard it as a kind of black or grey.

In the Middle Ages, the Church was almost the only patron of painting in Spain, and for the most part it confined its use of painting to altar-pieces, which were generally only a part of the very elaborate architectural decoration of the altar, and were only to be found in the greater churches, whose dignitaries were in close touch with Italy, and so had become accustomed to the idea of pictures in churches. The little village churches never got beyond the

idea of realistically coloured sculpture, which seemed more real to the people who used them than the most beautiful painting.

Moreover, while the majority of the works erected in Spanish churches were by native Spanish painters, there are very few among them which do not show that their producers derived their art directly from foreign sources. In the 14th and early 15th centuries, the School of Siena greatly influenced Spanish painters; this was to some extent due to the fact that they came into touch during the Papacy of Benedict XIII, who was a Spaniard, with the work of Simone Martini, and of Memmi, the Sienese painters, who had decorated the Palace of the Popes and the Cathedral at Avignon; but the thing to be remembered is that Spanish painters were content to go to foreign models which were three-quarters of a century old for their inspiration, and that they showed little or no power of invention of their own.

The most notable Spanish painter of the 15th century was Pedro Berruguete, a Castilian (*c.* 1440–1504), the father of the famous sculptor Alonso de Berruguete. His greatest work was the Reredos of St. Thomas at Avila, which he completed in 1499. His work is in the style of Flemish painting of some twenty-five years earlier, but it is stronger and more forcible in its contrasts of light and shade, as though he were trying to make his figures stand out like sculpture from their gold backgrounds. Another painter of the same period was Bartolomé de Cardenas, known as “El Bermejo” (the Red), who was born at Cordoba in southern Spain. His fame seems to have spread all over Spain, for he painted in Saragossa, and spent some years in Barcelona, and painted also for the Cathedral at Gerona, still further north. There is in a private collection in Scotland a picture, by him, of *St. Michael overcoming the Dragon*, while the donor of the picture, a small figure, kneels beside: the armour of the saint is drawn with wonderful accuracy of detail, and gold and jewels seem almost to glitter, so truthfully are they rendered in the smooth and brilliant colour; but all of it is simply Flemish

painting of the early 15th century, carried to a very high pitch of perfection ; it is not native Spanish art at all.

The first painter who, with a foreign training, really painted in a Spanish way, was Hernando Yañez de la Almedina, who was born in the province of La Mancha, probably about 1475. He was a pupil of Leonardo da Vinci down to 1505, and was engaged upon work at the Cathedral of Valencia from 1506 to 1510, and at Cuenca from 1526 to 1536 or thereabouts. He was the first to bring into Spain the free drawing and largeness of design of the Italian Renaissance, but instead of merely imitating his great master, he used the skill he had gained, to paint things as he actually saw them himself. He loved the rich ancient Moorish stuffs and embroideries which were so familiar to Spaniards, and painted them with loving care : and there is a picture by him of St. Catherine, in the collection of the Marquis de Casa-Arquedin at Madrid, in which the Cufic inscriptions woven in the border of the Saint's robe are so minutely painted that they can actually be read, though probably the painter himself did not know their meaning. The buildings in this picture are Spanish buildings, and it is quite plain that he was an artist who saw and thought for himself, not a mere imitator of foreigners.

However, Luis de Morales (1517-1586), who was called *El Divino* (the divine) on account of the deep religious feeling of his pictures, may be reckoned the founder of a really national school of Spanish painting. A remarkable thing is, that although his pictures seem to show that he founded his art upon a study of the great Italian painters, no one knows with whom, or where, he served his apprenticeship, nor how he can have seen the works of the great Renaissance artists. He was born at Badajoz, and spent almost the whole of his life in the west of Spain, in the province of Estremadura, far from the great centres of learning ; but it is possible that he may have studied in Toledo or in Valladolid. So far as we know, he did not visit Madrid till 1564, so that he cannot have derived any advantage from the works of art in the collections of Philip II ; but, in spite of these facts, he was able to

paint pictures which have all the delicate detail and precise drawing of Flemish art, and much of the grace and power of Italian art, and, in addition, a kind of forceful reality which is wholly Spanish. His colour is cold, and all the modelling and shading of his flesh tones is of a bluish-black tinge, which he did not copy from anyone: it gives an air of sadness and of severity to his work, which is quite different from anything Flemish or Italian, and he set his figures, with their pale faces and heavy eyelids, against backgrounds of dark shadow which seems ready to swallow them up, so that, while they stand out with tremendous force, they give the impression of coming out of, rather than of being set against, their background.

His pictures were not large, and he seldom painted a full-length figure. His favourite subjects were the Madonna and Child, and the Madonna with the Dead Christ; and that he must have painted from living models is shown by the Spanish type of features which he gives to them. In all his work there is an intense sadness, as though he were feeling all the time the human tragedy, more than the divine glory, of the Christ and His Mother; this too is Spanish, for to the Spaniard, with his literal point of view, it was impossible to lose sight of the human sorrow of the Mother, or the bodily anguish of the Son, as the Italian, who looked rather at the spiritual side of his religion, was able to do.

Morales, then, was entirely Spanish, both in his inspiration and in his way of expressing it; and the fact that he was given his name of "the divine" shows that his fellow-countrymen felt that he had expressed their religion for them in the way in which they felt it. As Cimabue had rejoiced the hearts of his Florentine fellow-countrymen by his calm, queenly, enthroned Madonna, so Morales satisfied the needs of his fellow-countrymen by his tired, tear-stained Madonna, with the dark shadows of sorrow around her eyes, and by the stiffened, deathly-pale limbs of his dead Christ.

Now, this love of sorrow, if we may call it so, is deeply seated in the Spanish character, and is not merely to be

found in his religious outlook. The Spaniard is not melancholy, but he is reserved. He seldom laughs aloud, and does not smile very often. He feels deeply, but expresses himself slowly. He has a natural gravity, which, while it gives him dignity, prevents him from being gay : and so this sadness is to be found, not only in his religious painting, but also in his portraiture ; and I cannot remember ever to have seen a Spanish portrait that was gay in expression, nor more than very few that even smiled.

It was the Kings of Spain who first brought portrait-painting into fashion, and the grimness of the Spanish Court was as stern a master as the austerity of Spanish religion. Even though Charles V and Philip II employed the glorious Venetian painter Titian, and the sensitive and human Flemish painter Antony Mor (known in Spain as Antonio el Moro), they retained their unsmiling dignity and impressed it upon the artists whom they employed : so portrait-painting grew up in Spain, based upon the careful study of the work of foreign artists, particularly of that of Titian, and yet from the first had this Spanish characteristic of sad gravity.

The first Spaniard to become a portrait-painter worthy to be considered side by side with foreign artists was Alonzo Sanchez Coello (1530-1588), who learned his art in the studio of Antony Mor, and later studied closely the work of Titian in the Royal collections, making many copies of his works. Thus his portraits show the influences of both Flemish and Italian painting ; but on the whole the quiet colour and rich detail of the Flemish School were more natural to him than the warmth and glow of Venetian painting, and his later portraits are rather cold in colour ; in this, he was leading the way towards a really Spanish school of painting ; and it is remarkable that, after his day, foreign portrait-painters were for a long time rare in Spain. Yet, before he was appointed Court Painter in 1571, no Spaniard had been thought worthy to hold the post, to which he succeeded when Antony Mor was obliged to leave Madrid hastily, owing, it is said, not only to his unpopularity at Court, but also to his lack of respect for the elaborate

ceremonial by which the King of Spain was surrounded. It may be that Philip II, who was a sad and gloomy man, was glad to have a Spaniard for his Court Painter, for he loved and understood pictures, and would often spend hours in his painter's studio, and made a friend of him, knowing that a Spaniard would not presume upon the royal graciousness, as Antony Mor had done. At any rate, he established a custom which was followed by his successors on the throne of Spain ; and the result was that the royal portraits of Spain have been painted truthfully and with understanding, by men who were at their ease in the royal presence.

This may seem unimportant, but in fact it was of the greatest importance in Spain ; for the Spaniard, as I have said, is truthful and literal, and paints, or tries to paint, only what he sees ; and we can easily see, that the Spanish portrait-painter, whose main business was that of painting Kings and Queens and Princes, could have made but slow progress in his art, if he had been afraid to be his natural self in the presence of the great people whose portraits he painted. His portraits must have been stiff and pompous and unnatural, instead of being, as they were, straightforward and simple, and, with all their dignity, the most natural and human portraits in the world. Coello painted in a single year, 1582, an emperor, a queen, and five archdukes and royal princes, and he painted King Philip II many times during the time that he was Court Painter. Many of the people he painted were far from beautiful, but he has painted them faithfully, without fear or favour ; and every one of them is a real human being.

Among them is a wonderful portrait of Don Carlos, a son of Philip II, who died at the age of twenty-two. This portrait was painted about 1563, when the Prince was seventeen, and shows him as a pale, sickly youth with cold grey eyes and an uneasy expression. Yet the picture is beautiful, because of the light on the doublet of cloth of gold, and the delicate changes of light and shade on the velvet and fur of the cloak, and the firm way in which the figure stands out from the shadowy background. In fact,

it looks *real*, and in its way is just as satisfying as the portrait of a lovely woman, such as that, also by Coello, of the Infanta Catalina Micaela, with all its glory of pearls and embroidery upon a dark dress, and the delicate features and dark eyes of the Princess.

It is a strange thing that the Spanish painters, while seeming always to put truth before beauty, managed to find beauty even in ugly things. In their religion, it was not the tender beauty of an imagined world of angels that they painted, but the tragic truth of the life and passion of Christ, and of the martyrdoms of saints; and in their portraiture, it was not by flattery, but by absolute honesty, that they were able to turn plain people into beautiful pictures, without altering a feature of their faces.

It was a good thing that they did not depend upon popular taste for their living, for it is not always easy to see quickly the beauty of their work. It was most fortunate that Spain should have had a succession of Kings who were able to see this rather subtle beauty, and wise enough to encourage artists who were trying, by all kinds of experiments, to increase the truthfulness of painting; for otherwise some of the greatest discoveries in the history of painting might never have been made.

An artist with a strange history, who owed his training to the Church and his living to the Court, was painter to the King side by side with Coello, from 1568 till his death in 1579, and was employed wholly upon religious subjects. This was Juan Fernandez Navarrete, commonly known as El Mudo, "the Dumb," because, from the age of three, he had been deaf and dumb. He was born in 1526, of a good family, and, unable to speak, he soon showed remarkable skill in expressing himself by means of rapid sketches in chalk; and his father, thinking that the gift was worth cultivating, sent him to learn painting from a friar at Estrella, who had some knowledge of the art. When this friar, Vicente de San Domingo, had taught him all he knew himself, he advised his parents to send him to Italy, and El Mudo went there at the age of about sixteen, visiting Rome, Naples, Florence, Milan, and Venice; he entered

the school of Titian at Venice, and remained there for some considerable time. It was probably while he was there that he was noticed by a high Spanish dignitary, who recommended him to the King, with the result that he was called to Madrid, and made painter to His Majesty.

Not unnaturally, his style had a good deal of resemblance to that of Titian. There was a kind of natural affinity between the Venetian and the Spanish characters in one respect at any rate: for both Venetians and Spaniards looked to real life for the setting of the sacred scenes that they painted, and liked to introduce into them everyday incidents; and indeed, El Mudo carried this tendency rather far when he painted a cat and dog quarrelling over a bone in the foreground of a picture of the Holy Family; and once he revenged himself on a Court official, who had slighted him, by painting him as one of the torturers in his picture of the *Martyrdom of St. James the Great*. The Church did not approve of these familiarities with religion, and in a contract which he signed for the thirty-two altar-pieces for the Church of the Escorial, it is expressly laid down that no undevotional incidents—dogs and cats are particularly mentioned—shall be introduced.

His colour is rich and warm, and his drawing has a greater boldness and freedom than that of any Spanish painter before him; to the end of his life he had a deep admiration for the work of Titian, and deliberately based his own work upon it, with the result that, although he was a noble painter, he did not help the development of truly Spanish painting: but at least he showed that it was possible for a Spaniard to fulfil the requirements of his own country in the matter of religious painting, as well as an Italian could do it.

Painting in Spain, then, was almost wholly in the hands of the Court and the Church; and this was a good thing, for it ensured that painters, in their earnest search after truth, should not sink into mere sordidness. They were bound to maintain dignity on the one hand, and morality on the other. The Inquisition not only laid down strict rules as to the way in which religious pictures should be

painted, but also, quite apart from religious painting, decided that certain subjects should not be painted at all; for example, classical subjects entailing the representation of nude female figures were entirely forbidden until late in the 17th century, and even then, when Spanish painting was at its very height, this kind of painting was restricted within very narrow limits. When we consider that such subjects, which had been painted freely in Italy from the end of the 15th century, depend for their beauty upon imaginative and idealized treatment, while the Spaniard's only idea was to achieve literal truth, we can easily see how necessary this restriction was, to preserve Spanish painting from sinking into sordid and brutal realism.

Even with all these restrictions, the artist who did more to carry Spanish painting forward towards its aim of realistic representation than any other, except the great Velazquez himself, was often violent and brutal in his handling both of religious subjects and of portraiture. It is a very remarkable thing that this painter, though he spent almost all his long painting life in Spain, should have been a foreigner. His name was Domenico Theotocopuli, and he was a Greek (hence his nick-name El Greco), born, it is said, at Candia, in Crete, about 1548, and so, a subject of the Republic of Venice. At any rate, we first hear of him about 1570 as the pupil of Titian, in Venice itself, and we know that his work, while he was there, was entirely Venetian, and wonderfully like that of Titian himself. It is not known why he came to Spain, nor why, having come, he settled in Toledo, not far from the capital; but once he was there, he very soon became the most famous painter in Spain.

He was born about 1548, and must have come to Spain some time before 1577, when we know that he was already working in Toledo upon a great altar-piece for the Cathedral there. The subject of the picture, which still hangs in the sacristy of the Cathedral, is the *Parting of Our Lord's Raiment*. There is much in this work to remind us of Titian, especially in the dignified central figure of Our Lord, clothed in a red robe, and drawn with more repose, and

greater breadth of light and shade than the rest of the composition; but there is a violence in some of the attitudes, and a certain overcrowding of the figures, which produce an effect of restlessness, and this is made more marked by the fact that the colour is lacking in the rich harmony of the Venetian style at which it aims.

Indeed, even while he was seeking to continue the manner of Titian, from whom he had learnt his art, El Greco seems to have been unhappy about it. Glowing colour and quiet harmony did not satisfy him; and when he received a command from the King, for a picture of the *Martyrdom of St. Maurice and the Christian Legion*, he let himself go, and threw aside all pretence of the Venetian style. He crammed his canvas with painfully long, thin figures, with colouring as livid as stone, muscles standing out violently with shadows of an unnatural bluish-black, and strange gleams of harsh light that made the picture seem like a tangle of movement. The King was terribly disappointed, and, though he paid for the picture, would not have it hung, as he had intended, in the Church of the Escorial, but had it put in the chapel of the college there. It is still at the Escorial, and Philip II seems to have seen that, though it was not beautiful, it was the work of a man who had greatness in him; however, it was for the Church that almost all the great work of El Greco was done, and the failure of his first royal commission seems to have steadied him, for the greatest picture, perhaps, that he ever produced was that which he did for the Church of St. Thomas at Toledo, immediately after the picture just mentioned.

The *Burial of the Conde de Orgaz* was painted as a memorial of a great benefactor of that church, of whom it was said that, when he died, St. Lawrence and St. Augustine descended from Heaven to lay him in the grave, as a tribute to the holiness of his life and the splendour of his benefactions. El Greco, in this picture, shows both the strength and the weakness of the Spanish character in relation to painting: for while the lower part of the picture represents with magnificent truth to life the long black background

of mourners, every one a portrait of a real and living man, the priests and friars in the foreground, and the Saints, one a young deacon, the other an aged bishop, lowering the fully armoured figure of the dead Count into his grave, with an absolute truthfulness to the actual life of the painter's own day, the upper part of the picture, which represents the reception of the soul of the Count in Heaven, is a sadly unimaginative treatment of a scene which the painter's imagination was not strong enough to grasp. The "soul" of the Count is a gaunt gigantic figure, and the company of Heaven is strangely and clumsily grouped upon clouds that are like the paste-board scenery of a theatre. The picture as a whole shows plainly that while El Greco could paint truthfully what he saw, he could not give reality to anything that he had not seen.

Now, in this picture we have a summing-up of the whole of the life-work of the painter. His one aim was truth: and just as a man who does not know a foreign language well, shouts in order to be understood, so El Greco over-emphasized his lights and shadows so as to convey the idea of the solidity of the forms that he tried to represent, because he was thinking of their solidity, and of the space that surrounded them, all the time. Much of his work is rather terrible because it is so harsh and violent in modelling, and his use of colour is clumsy and brutal. He puts yellow of the sourest kind, and a dull metallic rose-colour, and the coldest of blues, side by side, and his shadows are always of a cold and livid blue-black, which reminds one rather of sculpture in winter sunlight, than of paint: but, none the less, one feels that he was in deadly earnest, and that he cared far less for beauty, and even for artistic effect, than for reality of form.

This was just the painting that the Spaniard needed: and by the Spaniard I mean the Spanish painter, rather than the Spanish public. El Greco was never a popular painter in the sense that the ordinary everyday man liked his pictures: but he taught those painters who worked with him and after him to look at real life, and to want to paint not merely conventional pictures in a foreign—an

Italian or a Flemish—way, but to represent what they really saw, and to break away from the tradition that the purpose of painting was no more than to decorate—to make pleasant to look upon—a certain amount of space.

For this reason, his portraits, despite their gloominess and lack of colour, are wonderfully satisfying. They have as a rule an air of gentle melancholy, which is the result of the long and narrow shape which he gives to most of the faces of his subjects, and their large dark luminous eyes gaze out of the canvas in a way which reminds one rather uncannily of the early Byzantine paintings in Italy, before Giotto's day. Indeed, El Greco never forgot that he was a Greek, and it seems as though he must either have studied the ancient paintings that were descended from the Byzantine Greek tradition, of which he had seen many, at any rate in the form of mosaics, at Venice, or that this way of seeing people was actually in his blood: however that may be, these long, thin faces, and slender, delicate, nervous hands, are more Byzantine than Venetian; but, because he lived among Spaniards, and painted the people about him, and because truth to life was his great aim, they are more Spanish than anything that was ever painted before them.

El Greco died in 1614 at Toledo, where he had lived during the whole of his life in Spain, and all through his career he was a student and an experimentalist. It is a mistake to try to divide his work up into periods of "eccentric" and "normal" painting; for some of his most experimental and eccentric pictures, like the *St. Maurice*, were painted while he was still obviously under the influence of Titian's style, as shown by the *Parting of Our Lord's Raiment* and the *Burial of the Conde de Orgaz*. His beautiful portrait of his son, now at Seville, and the two portraits of Fra Hortensio Felix Paravicino (1605), one in the collection of the Marquis de Casa-Torres at Madrid, and the other (1609) in the Boston Museum, both of them as sober and dignified as portraits can be, were painted at a time when he was making experiments of the wildest kind; and there are works by him which lie between the

two groups, like the *St. Francis of Assisi*, in the National Gallery of Ireland, with its hard blue sky and ragged drifting clouds, and the livid face of the saint, which, for all its ghastly pallor, has a tender and beautiful expression.

To sum up, El Greco did not aim at painting beautiful pictures, but at painting in such a way as to make us forget the flat canvas, and to see the figures standing out solidly with space around them. Because he had no sense of colour, his pictures are often disagreeable and harsh; and because he had only a very literal kind of imagination, the pictures in which he tried to represent things that he had not seen—such as angels, kneeling upon clouds—are clumsy and confused: the *Agony in the Garden*, in the National Gallery, London (N.G. 3476), illustrates both these facts, but the *Cleansing of the Temple*, in the same collection (1457), a smaller version of a picture in the sacristy of the Cathedral at Valladolid, shows how very far El Greco advanced along the road towards the true representation of solid form and space and distance, from the beautiful, but purely pictorial, methods of Titian.

It has been necessary to spend a good deal of time over the work of this painter, because, though he made many mistakes and failed perhaps more often than he succeeded, it was he who showed the way to the great Spanish painters of the 17th century, of whom one at least was two centuries ahead of all the rest of the world in the conquest of absolute truth in the representation of form and space by means of painting.

Although El Greco was so remarkable a painter, he left no "school" of followers when he died in 1614. His own son never became an artist of any note, and though his best pupil, Tristan de Toledo, was not unskilful, his work was scarcely more than a faint echo of that of his master.

However, before El Greco died, the second greatest city in Spain, Seville, the capital of Andalusia, had already become a centre of artistic activity, to which the painters of all parts of Spain tended to turn for instruction; and it was in Seville that Spanish painting first built up a continuous tradition of its own.

So far, we have only been able to study the work of each painter separately, without being able to compare one with another, for each one of them had had to build up his own style as best he might from foreign models, and neither influenced, nor was influenced by, his fellow-artists to any great extent ; but in Seville, during the whole of the last three-quarters of the 16th century, there was a real group of painters, who, though they founded their work upon study of the Italians, nevertheless were completely Spanish in feeling, and, being free from the influence, both of the strong leaning of the King and Court towards Venetian painting, and of the extravagant experiments of El Greco, were able peacefully to develop a natural and unaffected style of their own.

The earliest of this group of painters was Luis de Vargas (1502-1568) who, though he first learned to paint from a Sevillian painter (Diego de la Barrera), soon left this master and spent many years in Italy, returning to Seville about 1550. His *Nativity*, painted in 1555 for the Cathedral, shows the influence of Raphael, but it is plain that much of it is painted direct from nature, and though it is full of detail, it is also very strong and free in drawing, and the lights and shadows are so vigorous as to give it an air of great reality. Another picture by him (1561), representing the human ancestors of Our Lord, worshipping, is commonly known as "The Leg" (*La Gamba*), because the bare leg of Adam, in the foreground, is so beautifully drawn and so powerfully modelled in light and shade ; and it is said that a portrait that he painted of one of the clergy of the Cathedral was so wonderful a likeness, that people with nothing better to do used to hang about the church to see the priest and his portrait side by side.

This same love of truthful realism marks the work of Juan de las Roelas (1558-1625), who was a priest at the Church of Olivarez near Seville. He is said to have studied under Tintoretto at Venice, and the splendid design and beautiful rendering of light, together with the rich but sombre colouring of his pictures, are just what we should expect from a pupil of Tintoretto : but the simple realism

of the Spaniard shows through all the splendour; in his *St. Anne teaching the Virgin to Read* (Seville Museum) a table with sweets upon it, in the *Adoration of the Shepherds* (Seville University) a broken drum that is often taken for a hole in the canvas, and in the *Moses striking the Rock* (Prado, Madrid) thoroughly Spanish children clamouring thirstily for water, and a woman drinking from a gourd that is so wonderfully truly painted that the picture goes by the nickname of "The Calabash," all show that, here in Seville, painters, though learning their craft from Italy, were using it in their own truthful Spanish way; so that at last this truthfulness came to be the outstanding feature of the national Spanish School.

A strange character, Francisco de Herrera the Elder (1576-1656) was perhaps the first of the School of Seville to learn his art wholly in Spain and from Spanish masters. Surrounded as he was by the works of Vargas and Roelas, he carried their realism further still, and threw aside altogether the last traces of Italian ways of painting. He was a man of violent temper—so violent that he never could keep a pupil or an assistant—and a violent painter too. He used huge brushes, and loaded his paint on to the canvas in great lumps; he did his drawing with great burnt sticks, and worked at a furious pace; but all his work is marked by fine composition, and dignity in the drawing of human figures, and by tremendous vigour of light and shadow, bringing the forms out into startling relief.

He shares with a painter as different as possible from himself, Francisco Pacheco (1571-1654), a poor artist but a very scholarly student of the history and principles of painting, the honour of having given instruction to the greatest of all Spanish painters, Velazquez, whose art we shall study presently.

There is, however, another artist of the School of Seville whose work must be considered first, not merely because he happened to be born a year earlier than Velazquez, but because, as a painter, he achieved all that was possible by means of the old methods, instead of creating a new art of painting as Velazquez did.

Francisco de Zurbaran (1598–1662) was born at Fuente de Canos in the province of Estremadura, and was apprenticed at the age of sixteen to an image-painter in Seville, named Pedro Diaz de Villanova, but afterwards became a pupil of Juan de las Roelas. This training, first among sculptures, and then with the finest colourist of the School of Seville, gave his work a character which it never lost; for his familiarity with sculpture made him pay very close attention to form, especially in the drawing of the folds of drapery; because he had coloured statues, he always painted each separate object, each cloth, or cushion, or robe, in its own colour, so to speak, and then “sculptured” it with shading. This is easily seen in the **Virgin, aged Six*, at Petrograd, for the white handkerchief on which the child’s hands are resting, the green cushion below it, and the golden-red skirt, are, each of them, complete and separate studies: but, because he had learnt the beauty of colour, and had seen how the colour, or tone, of light, influences all the colours upon which it falls, bringing them into harmony with one another, he put into the red, the white, the green, and the black of this picture a touch of warm golden-yellow, so that we seem to see the whole subject through a glowing golden light, which holds it all together.

This was, in its way, a great advance, for it shows that Zurbaran had realized that it is not what a thing is, nor what it looks like by itself, that makes it beautiful in a picture, but what it looks like in relation to its surroundings. It is no use to paint a lot of separate things truthfully on a canvas, so that everyone can see exactly what they are. It may be interesting, just as a catalogue may be interesting, but it is not beautiful. Nor is it much use—to a Spaniard at any rate—to hide in a flood of colour, however harmonious it may be, the commonplace things that one puts into a picture; that may be beautiful, but it will be meaningless to anyone who wants to feel the reality of the picture, as the Spaniard did; and Zurbaran realized that even a perfectly simple subject, like that of this picture, or a grim and terrible subject, like his *Praying Friar*, in the National Gallery, London (N.G. 230), is beautiful, not just because it is real,

but because it is seen all at once. That is to say, the eyes take it in easily, and are not obliged to go wandering about all over the subject to see it bit by bit ; they are not worried by having to look at the picture in a different way from that in which they look at nature. The detail, in Zurbaran's picture, is all there ; and it is said that he painted everything, down to the last wrinkle in a piece of drapery, from the actual thing itself ; but it matters, not for its own sake, but only because it tells the eye at once, and without any effort, what it represents.

Now Zurbaran only just missed the great truth, which Velazquez discovered, that all that the eyes ever see is *light*. In a pitch-dark room, though it be hung with all the richest coloured silks and velvets in the world, and studded with gold and jewels, one sees nothing at all : but let in a single ray of light, and dim crimsons and purples, dark greens and shadowy blues, grow faintly visible, and a timid sparkle shines through the shadows ; throw the shutters wide, and every colour blazes, and jewels flash like the sun : and all that beauty is nothing but light, reflected from the stuffs and stones that were invisible till the light came.

So, to make sure that this light, which is beauty itself, shall not be overlooked, Zurbaran paints, not the white light that simply shows us things exactly as they are, but the golden light of evening, that gives its own golden beauty to everything on which it falls, and his backgrounds, which are never crowded, are either so dark, as in the two pictures which I have mentioned, or so light, as in some of his great religious pictures like the *St. Thomas Aquinas*, or the *Coronation of St. Joseph*, both in the Museum at Seville, that they do not give us too much to look at, but leave us free to look at the figures, which have a wonderful quiet and stillness, for all their rich colour and careful detail. He was very fond of painting friars and monks, especially Carthusian monks with their white robes, and all the people in his pictures have the appearance of being portraits ; he often painted Spanish ladies in the character of Saints, and was so true to nature that in many of these

pictures we can see that these ladies' faces are "made up" with paint and powder in the way demanded by the Court etiquette of the times. An example of this is *A Lady in the Character of St. Margaret*, in the National Gallery, London (N.G. 1930).

We may sum up by saying that Zurbaran's idea was, that in order to paint a true picture he must set down accurately in paint everything that he knew was there; but that, as no human eye can see all at once everything that the mind knows *ought* to be there, he must simplify the task of the eye by toning down this detail by means of a deep glow of light. He had not got so far as to realize that what cannot be seen in one steady look *is not there* so far as the eye is concerned. That was what Velazquez discovered, as we shall now see.

Don Diego Rodriguez de Silva y Velazquez, to give him his full name, was born at Seville in 1599, and was the son of a lawyer of very ancient family but no great wealth; he was carefully educated, but while still a schoolboy, he showed such talent in drawing that his father decided to let him become a painter. The poor boy went first to the studio of the elder Herrera, who was so brutal to him that he was soon taken away, and sent to study with Francisco de Pacheco. Still, perhaps it was just as well that he had a few uncomfortable months with Herrera, for that violent person seems to have taught him a good deal in a short time. Herrera was an adventurous painter, and Pacheco was not; and in the years to come, Velazquez was to be the greatest adventurer in the art of painting since the time of Giotto.

In fact, though Velazquez learned from Pacheco a great deal about the scholarly side of painting, its history, and the names of ancient painters, and so on, he was really self-taught. He kept a peasant boy as a model, and made charcoal drawings of him, laughing, crying, and in every attitude, till he had learned how to draw rapidly and truthfully exactly what he saw: and he painted pictures of dull, ordinary things—eggs, and onions, and fish, and pots and pans, without drawing the outlines in first, till

he could use a brush and colours with the perfect certainty that each stroke would do what he wanted it to do, and that the finished picture would be the "very image" of the things themselves. His next step was to put figures into these "eating-house" pictures (*bodegones*) as they are called, and the truth and reality of these peasants are perfectly astonishing. They are very still, as though they had stopped working to be painted, but the drawing of them is wonderful, and the lights and shadows are so firmly painted that they seem to stand right out of the canvas. Sir Herbert Cook has one in his collection at Richmond, of an old woman frying eggs, while a boy stands by holding a bottle and a melon with a string tied round it. On a table are a brass mortar and pestle, a white bowl with a knife laid across it, pots and a jug, and all these things are painted so that not only their shapes are true, but even the different surfaces and textures, of woollen and linen cloth, earthenware, brass and the rest, can almost be felt.

Another such picture, in the National Gallery, London (N.G. 1375), is called *Christ in the House of Martha and Mary*; in it, a sulky-looking girl is pounding something in a brass mortar, and stops to look up, while an old woman touches her on the arm and points out of the picture. Up in the top right-hand corner of the canvas is, as it were, another little picture, of Christ with Martha and Mary, seen at a distance and quite small; the colour of this part of the picture is rather flat and grey, and there is no detail in it at all. I shall come back to this picture again, for it shows that in painting these pictures of rather dull subjects, Velazquez did not think much about beauty; he was already trying to find out something for himself that no one could teach him; and, like El Greco before him, and Zurbaran side by side with him in Seville, he was making experiments all his life; but with this difference, that he knew from the first what he was aiming at, while they were working more or less at random.

The next stage in his progress is shown by the wonderful picture of the *Water-seller of Seville* which was long afterwards given to the great Duke of Wellington by King

Ferdinand VII of Spain, and is now at Apsley House. It is a picture of an old man selling a glass of drinking-water to a boy who is almost hidden in shadow, while the light falls strongly on the face and shoulder of the water-seller and on the tall earthenware jar beside him, and sparkles clearly in the big glass which the boy holds in his hand, nearly in the centre of the picture. One *looks* at the glass, and merely *sees* the rest of the picture. Velazquez was doing what Zurbaran was doing—making the subject easy to see—but in exactly the opposite way from Zurbaran. Instead of making the light all over alike, he made it so much stronger at one point, that the eye could not wander about, but just took in, as a matter of course, the figures that surrounded the central point of light.

As time went on, he painted large religious pictures, and in these it is easy to see, by the solidity of the shadows and the hardness of the lights, that they were painted in a studio with a top light on the left hand; but it is also plain that all his figures and faces were drawn from peasant models, without the least attempt to make them look more beautiful or more noble than they really were.

In 1622, when he was twenty-three, he visited Madrid, but it was not till the following year that his work was introduced to the notice of the young King Philip IV, with the immediate result that he was appointed painter to the King, and universally acknowledged the greatest portrait-painter in Spain.

From that moment to the day of his death in 1660, his supremacy was never challenged, and only twice in his life did Philip IV allow any other artist to paint his portrait; but Velazquez, though he was only four-and-twenty, did not let success turn him aside from his great object, which was, to discover how to put upon flat canvas the real world that he saw, with all its space and light and air. He painted the King, just as he had painted his peasant-boy, truthfully, and, as far as he could without departing from Court tradition, arranged his portraits, whomsoever they might represent, so as to be able to use them as studies of light and form.

When he was not painting royal portraits, however, he was glad to get back to his commonplace subjects of peasants and pots, and in 1629 he painted a picture which is called *The Village Bacchus* or *The Topers (los Borrachos)*. It represents a youth, naked except for a cloak round his middle, and crowned with vine-leaves, crowning with a garland a peasant who kneels before him, and surrounded by a group of other peasants, who are grinning in mock-worship—a most rascally crowd. Every one of them is marvellously alive, and the “drawing” is absolutely perfect: but the “Bacchus,” on whom the light falls strongly, is posing rather too carefully, and all the other figures look as if they knew they were being “taken,” rather like the people who stop and look straight at the camera when a cinematograph film of a crowd is being taken. Somehow the picture does not hold together. Each of the separate figures is a living human being, but they are all separate from each other, in spite of their clever grouping.

It was while Velazquez was painting this picture that the great Flemish painter, Peter Paul Rubens, came as an ambassador to the Spanish Court, and Velazquez was appointed to look after him and show him the Royal collection of pictures, from which he made many copies, besides painting many portraits of members of the Royal Family. The tremendous speed and ease with which Rubens worked must have astonished Velazquez, who was a very deliberate worker, not only then, but all his life. There is no doubt that he admired the glowing colour and rich design of Rubens' work; but his own painting was not influenced in the least by that of the Flemish artist.

Nevertheless, it is due to Rubens that Velazquez was able to take yet another step towards solving the problem which he had set himself, for Rubens persuaded him to obtain from King Philip IV permission to visit Italy. It was on this visit that he was able to copy the works of Tintoretto at Venice, and above all, while resting at the Villa Medici for his health, to make the two exquisite open-air sketches of the Medici Gardens which are now in the Prado.

It is wonderful to see how Velazquez has caught, in these sketches, the silvery-grey tone of a soft light that casts no heavy shadows, and has been able to suggest detail without actually painting it. It seems that it was at this point that he began to leave out what he did not actually see, and so got on to the track of the truth that he was seeking: the effect of these works on him is seen in the two pictures that he painted at Rome, of *The Forge of Vulcan* and *Joseph's Coat*, for in these, though the figures are spread out in a row from one side of the canvas to the other, they are not separate, like the *Topers*, but hold together, because the same cool light contains them all.

It was the beginning of a new stage in his art. It was nearly twenty years before he was in Italy again, but during all those years he painted, not what he knew was there, but just what he saw. It was as though his canvas were a mirror, and he put upon it only the touches of colour that went to make up the reflection of men, and trees and mountains and sky; and instead of painting upon a dark red ground, as he had always done, he painted on a ground of silvery-grey, for all the world like the colour of a mirror when it reflects only unbroken light.

Now, when we look at nature, we see sharply in focus only the one thing on which we fix our eyes, and the rest less sharply; and Velazquez learned to fix his gaze. Gradually, he learned to leave out detail except at the one point where he could *really* see it; and so he came to paint distance and air as well as light, and no longer needed to make his figures stand out by painting heavy, solid shadows: nor did he need even to cover all his grey background with paint, to get his result. When he painted the portrait of his friend the sculptor Martinez Montañes, for instance, he scarcely did more than smear in the shadows in his velvet coat, and left much of the canvas bare to represent the lights—the plain mirror, so to speak; yet the figure is that of a solid heavy man, and the velvet is velvet. Since he matched exactly what he saw, by the paint that he put on the canvas, and since what he saw was velvet, we see velvet on his canvas to-day.

So, whether it were the King of Spain upon a charger, or in hunting-dress, with the hills and woods of Spain for a background, or an idiot dwarf, ugly and misshapen, that he painted, it was all the same to him, for it was light in space that he was painting, and light is beautiful: and if he had to paint a princess, in a fantastic dress of mighty hoops, and yellow hair with scarlet feathers in it, like that of the **Princess Margarita Teresa*, the ugliness of the dress and the stiff ceremonial attitude of the figure did not dismay him, for, with free, sure little dabs of paint, he caught and set down the shimmer of grey silk and silver, and rose-coloured skirts and stripes and trimmings and scarlet bows and glittering decorations, set against an empty—a *really* empty—background of darkness through which we can just see the dull glow of the leather-panelled walls, like those rich hangings of a half-shuttered room of which I spoke just now.

And, last of all, not long before he died, he painted two pictures that are, if I may call them so, just portraits of light and space, and nothing else.

One of them is called *The Spinners (Las Hilanderas)* and represents the interior of the Royal tapestry factory. In the middle background, an archway opens from the dimly-lit room which fills the foreground of the picture, and beyond this archway is seen a brilliantly lit room hung with tapestries which are being examined by a group of Court ladies. From this inner room the light comes pouring out into the dim room in which we seem to stand, and touches as it passes the figures of the workwomen at their spinning-wheels. On the left, one of them draws aside a great curtain as though to let in the light from the inner room. Colour looms out of the darkness everywhere, but the strong light falling on the shoulder of a girl on the right fixes our gaze, and all the rest of the picture falls into place around and beyond that one point. The way in which darkness gives way to the light that thrusts its way towards us, through the dusky air, is a miracle of reality. To see this picture is to forget that it is flat canvas, a mere arrangement of paint.

It reminds us strangely of another picture, that I have already mentioned, the *Christ in the House of Martha and Mary* ; for the inner room is vaguely like the little picture within a picture that I have described : but to understand exactly why we are so reminded, we must look at the other great picture of light, that is called **The Maids of Honour* (*Las Meniñas*).

It is the picture of a little girl who did not want to have her portrait painted. It is the same little Princess whom we have seen in the picture at Vienna, the Princess Margarita Theresa. Here, she seems to be about five years old. Right in the foreground of the picture, she stands in a great gloomy room that stretches out behind her, and her head is twisted pettishly to one side. On her right a maid of honour kneels, persuading her to be good, and on the other side of her stands another, who seems to try to humour her. In one corner of the picture, nearer still to the front, are two quaintly-dressed dwarfs, and a great dog lies sleepily in front of them. Further back, two attendants, a man and a woman, stand half hidden in shadow. Right at the back of the room, clear cut against the bright light that comes through an open door, is the figure of a man, and beside the door, upon the wall, is a mirror, in which are reflected dimly the figures of the King and Queen ; and the left-hand edge of the picture is taken up from the very foot, almost to the top, by the back of a great canvas, beside which, brushes and palette in his hands, stands the painter himself.

The whole picture, then, was painted from its reflection in a mirror, and, facing the picture and its painter, as you and I face it, stood the King and Queen. The strong light reflected from the mirror throws the figure of the Princess and her maids of honour into brilliant relief, but scarcely penetrates the darkness behind them ; but it is caught by the mirror at the end of the room, which gleams back through the dusk, while a soft light from the curtained windows on the right just catches the high ceiling and the walls.

In this picture then, the light is banded to and fro across the big empty darkness of the middle of the room,



VELASQUEZ
Las Meninas
(Spanish)

reflected from mirror to mirror ; and though it is the little Princess we look at, it is the high room, and the dim, struggling light that we remember.

Velazquez saw it all in a mirror, as flat as his own canvas, and painted just exactly what he saw. At close quarters it is a meaningless muddle of shapeless dabs of paint, but when we stand away from it, it all falls together as if by magic. He *copied* the mirror ; and that was what he was aiming at when he painted *Christ in the House of Martha and Mary*, for the "little picture within a picture" was a mirror on the wall, with Christ and Martha and Mary reflected in it, while the old woman and the girl in the foreground looked *out* of the picture at the figures of whom Velazquez painted only the reflection in the mirror behind them.

So from the beginning to the end of his career Velazquez was faithful to the Spanish love of truth. At the very beginning he saw that, if a canvas is flat, so is a mirror ; and that if in a mirror one could see space and depth and atmosphere, he would be able, by treating his canvas as if it were a mirror, and painting a reflection on it, so to speak, to represent all these things exactly as they appear to the eye : but it was only slowly that he came to see that things appear to the eye, not as they really are, but only as the eye can take them in, that is, one thing clearly, and all the rest less sharply, according to their distance from the point on which the eyes are fixed. Once he could paint them so, he could paint reality.

Three years later he died. But I cannot help thinking that when he painted those two great pictures, he had in mind his earliest attempts, and took delight in proving that he had been on the right track from the first.

His discovery died with him. His son-in-law and pupil El Mazo did not understand it, and was only a faithful imitator, whose work got worse as he grew older, and after Velazquez there was but one great painter of the School of Seville, Bartolome Esteban Murillo (1618-1682), who, though at heart perhaps no less a realist than Velazquez, was content to spend the greater part of his genius upon grace-

ful and sentimental religious pictures. He was the pupil of one Castillo at Seville, but soon had to earn a living by painting pictures in the market-place for miserable sums ; but he had ambition, and pinched and saved till he could go to Madrid, where, about 1642, he was kindly treated and instructed by Velazquez, and made such rapid progress that Velazquez offered to help him to visit Rome ; but he preferred to return to Seville, where, in 1645, he accepted a very small payment for painting eleven great pictures in a Franciscan convent. His fortune was made, and from this time onward he produced a flood of great religious pictures, full of tender beauty and warm and delicate colour, yet all redeemed from mere empty grace by the simple reality of the Spanish types of his saints and lovely girlish Madonnas. As time went on his style became broader and lighter and his colour richer, and more and more he introduced common and everyday types of folk into his pictures, as in the picture of *Moses striking the Rock*, in the Church of S. Jorge of La Caridad at Seville, which is perhaps his masterpiece. This was in 1674. In the same set of pictures, but now in the Academy of San Fernando at Madrid, is another subject, *St. Elizabeth tending the Sick*, or commonly called *The Verminous Boy* (*El Tiñoso*) because of the rather horrible truthfulness with which such a figure is painted. In painting such unpleasant subjects, Murillo left nothing to the imagination, and he is almost as well known for pictures like that of the **Melon Eaters* as for his religious subjects. A couple of ragged youngsters are seated on the ground, each with a piece of melon in his hand, the one turning to the other and apparently talking with his mouth full, while the other, with his head thrown back, is munching at a bunch of grapes. They have no table manners, and they are very dirty, and half-naked, but they look healthy, happy and natural ; and the warm sunshine upon them, and the rich shadow behind them, make the picture as good a glimpse of Spanish back-street life as one could wish to see.

Murillo loved Seville, and Seville honoured him. His was not a genius like that of Velazquez, but his work is

both livelier and gentler than that of his great compatriot ; he represents a side of the Spanish character that has not been so truly reflected by any other painter.

After the death of Murillo painting in Spain has no history worth recording for nearly a hundred years. It was in 1746 that there was born at Fuente de Todos, in Aragon, Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes, a painter of the true Spanish breed, a man as violent as Herrera, as sincere as Velazquez, and of a brutality more forcible and more fanciful than any painter before him. His first studies were in Zaragoza, the capital of Aragon : from the first he was a turbulent youth, and presently, about 1765, he had to escape to Madrid through having been mixed up with some religious brawls in Zaragoza. In Madrid, most of the artists were foreigners, and Goya probably learned more from the old masters in the Royal collections than from any master ; and he became a fine swordsman and an accomplished bull-fighter as well. However, he again got into trouble with the authorities, and when he went to Rome in 1769, it was quite as much to get out of danger of arrest as to learn more about painting : and it was another escapade that brought him packing back to Spain.

It was not until he married about 1775, in fact, that his artistic career began in earnest. He was then appointed to make designs for the royal tapestry factory, and in these there is a strong French influence. They are cold in colour and sometimes rather gaunt in design ; but all the figures in them are thoroughly Spanish, and above all alive and vigorous. He is fond of sudden changes of light, like those in **The Swing* (Collection of the Duke of Montelano, Madrid). A girl is seated on a swing hung between two trees, one quite bare, and the other nearly so, with its branches standing out dark against a golden sky. The distant mountains and trees are blue and greenish-grey, but the middle distance is bright golden, so that the figures of the girl, and of the men who are swinging her, stand out strongly against it. It is a gay picture, but it has a touch of hardness and of strength which seems rather too heavy for the subject. In fact, Goya was more at home with subjects that had more

to do with real life than designs for tapestry could have, and it was when he was painting portraits that he was at his best, or his worst, according to the amount of sympathy he had with his sitter ; for he was terribly sincere. It is said that he was in love with the Duchess of Alba ; and certainly his portraits of her, though some of them are stiff and ceremonious, are generally lively and real ; he had no great respect for King Carlos IV, though he became his Court Painter, and he painted him, cleverly, and most unkindly, to look a bigger fool than he was, but nevertheless a dignified fool. It is said that, when he painted the **Portrait of the Duke of Wellington*, he chased him round the studio with a loaded pistol, over some little misunderstanding ; and though this portrait is one of his very finest paintings, it cannot be called sympathetic. The colour is hard and brilliant, and the expression of the eyes and mouth is as though they were determined to tell us nothing about the thoughts : but, like all the work of Goya, in portraiture at any rate, it has a kind of fierce vigour. The paint is laid on boldly, and the head and shoulders come out of their shadowy background in a rather aggressive fashion.

Goya saw the horrors of the French invasion, and of the Massacres of the 2nd of May in Madrid, and painted them and drew them, savagely and terribly and literally. He loathed humbug, and caricatured it cruelly. He hated the misery of the poor, and the diseased, and the imprisoned, yet his dreadful pictures of the pest-house and the prison, like that in the Bowes Museum, painted almost without colour, in extremes of light and shade, are beautiful in design, though gruesomely realistic in treatment.

From middle age he was stone-deaf, and this perhaps made him more morose, and his imagination more inclined to the horrible, and he painted cruel satires upon the life, and even on the religion of his day. Even in his portraits of young and lovely women there are traces of his tendency to find evil everywhere, as for example in the portrait, in the National Gallery, London (N.G. 1473), of the **Doña Isabel Corbo de Porcel*, whose youthful charm is spoiled by an insolent pose, by the cold colouring and the livid shadows



G. OYA
The Swing
(Spanish)

around the eyes and mouth ; and very few of his portraits of men make us wish we could know the people they represent.

But he was sincere. For his friends he had a warm heart, and he loved children, though he did not paint them well. He was a follower of Velazquez, for he did not fear to paint the truth as he saw it ; but he had neither the true eyesight nor the superb skill to see and to set down what he saw. So his paintings are sometimes clumsy in their execution, and often horrible in their point of view.

He left no successor when he died at Bordeaux in 1828, at the age of eighty-two, vigorous in mind to the very last : but the force and the sincerity of his work made it a model to the French school of impressionists, more than thirty years later ; when artists once more began to tire of painting by set rules of composition, and to seek for truth in the world they saw around them, it was to Spain, to the violent and brutal Goya, and to the grave and courtly Velazquez, that they had to turn for inspiration, and for the means to express it. For long enough after her great artists were dead, the art of Spain was almost unknown outside her borders ; but now it has come into its own.

CHAPTER VII

THE FRENCH SCHOOL

THE history of painting in France reflects the intellectual rather than the emotional aspect of the national character. Although, in this country, we are accustomed to regard the Latin races as demonstrative and emotional, a very little consideration will show that, at any rate so far as France is concerned, emotion and sentiment are always controlled in their expression by a keen sense of order in the means of expression. For instance, the rules controlling metre and rhyme in French poetry are rigid and mechanical to a degree very puzzling to English ideas, and have been formally laid down by an official body which exists for the express purpose of seeing that the French language is not marred by loose and inexact use. This does not mean that the Frenchman is insincere or cold, but rather that he is so clear-headed, so intellectually active, that he does not feel that an emotion has been adequately expressed, unless it has been put into recognized and artistic form.

With regard to painting, the result of this attitude of mind has been very peculiar. On the one hand, it has insured that French painting should always be sound in craftsmanship and of definite and permanent value in the history of art : but on the other hand, it has made French critics, and the leading artists of each generation, almost impervious to the influence of great and revolutionary genius, because the expression of genius cannot be reduced to line and rule. Before the period of the French Revolution every French painter of strong originality, whose temperament and point of view drove him to break away from accepted standards, whether in subject or method, was obliged to leave his own country in order to find freedom to develop his art upon his own lines : and both before and since that time, even the most original of French painters have very speedily worked out their own laws to govern themselves and their own art ; indeed, it would scarcely be too much to say that the French genius consists in discovering the laws of beauty of every kind, and

in building up an art to express that beauty in accordance with those laws. Thus, there are few breaks in the steady development of French painting, but when a break does occur, it is violent and complete, and at the same time very quickly works out its own rules and obeys them.

It is quite obvious that an art which is the expression of this highly intellectual point of view can never be, in the ordinary sense of the word, a popular art. In the absence of widespread education, it is bound to address itself to a limited public, consisting in monarchical France of the very small class which was capable of appreciating it: and the very few artists who defied the conventions accepted by that class had but a small chance of fame or prosperity.

In mediæval France, this intellectual character was not so absolutely dominant, for the chief patron of art was the Church, and the purpose of religious art makes it necessary that it shall be intelligible to the multitude. In France, as in England and Flanders, the earliest use of painting was in the decoration of books, and in their illustration by means of miniatures. The French miniatures of the 13th and 14th centuries are brilliant in colour and lively in the representation of action, and very delicate in execution. Their drawing is uncertain, and the composition is often overcrowded, but they are always spirited and full of human interest. By the end of the 14th century the Parisian and Burgundian schools of miniaturists had reached a high level of excellence as illustrators, without having mastered any of the serious problems of draughtsmanship.

The painting of pictures on a larger scale was mainly carried out by foreign artists, at first from Italy, and later from Flanders. French taste inclined in the direction of the liveliness of narrative and rich colour of the Sienese School, and as far back as the 14th century Simone Martini had come from Siena to Avignon to decorate the Cathedral and the Palace of the Popes; and it was primarily from his work that the Avignonese School of native French painters derived their rules; but as the fame of Flemish painting

spread southward, they were equally ready to adopt the methods of the Flemings, and by the middle of the 15th century Avignonese painting was superficially more Flemish than Italian in manner. Yet, as late as 1450-60, Enguerrand Charonton painted in oil a *Mater Dolorosa* (Our Lady of Sorrows), so Flemish in general effect as to have been attributed, when first discovered, to Rogier van der Weyden, but still retaining a formula for the painting of sorrowful eyes which is manifestly derived directly from the Sienese School of the 14th century.

The work of Fouquet (1415-1483), who was Court Painter to Louis XI, shows a thoughtful blending of the influences of the Italian and Flemish traditions, reflecting the former in the decorative spacing of the design, and the latter in the strong expression of individual character and emotion. In his work, in fact, we see the beginning of that conscious searching after the laws of design and draughtsmanship which was to become in another century's time the driving force of French painting.

The reign of Francis I, like that of his English contemporary, Henry VIII, was a turning-point in the history of the art of his nation. He was a man of wide artistic interests, and a generous patron of the arts, and made many efforts to bring into France the influence of great Italian artists and their works. Leonardo da Vinci ended his days in France in the service of the French king, and Andrea del Sarto, as we have seen, might have been the controlling force in a new French school of painting if he had not betrayed his trust; and Primaticchio lived and painted at the French Court for thirty years, and exercised no small influence upon the French painters of his day.

The greatest of these Italians, Leonardo da Vinci, has left no mark on French painting, and it is a little difficult to understand why this is so. Possibly it is because of the quality of mystery in his work, which would baffle the logical minds of the French; but, whatever the reason, it is certain that he, although on the spot, made less impression upon French art, than was made, at a distance and at second-hand, by Michelangelo and Raphael. The

Italianizing art of France in the 16th century, as, for example, that of Martin Fréminet (1567-1619), is scarcely more than a scholarly but pretentious imitation of the forms of Italian art : but, earlier in the century, Léonard Limosin, not a painter in the ordinary sense of the word, but a painter in enamel, had shown that a French artist could combine for his own use the free drawing and decorative unity of Raphael, with the brilliance of line and vigour of expression of Albrecht Dürer, by whose drawings he was greatly influenced. In fact, during the first half of the century, French art was still feeling its way towards a national style, and the tendency, which later became almost a law, to divide painting into classes or groups, each with its own recognized rules of style and treatment, was beginning to show itself. There was no longer competition between the influences of Flanders and Italy. The former took complete command of portraiture, and the latter concerned itself with the heroic, the religious, and the decorative aspects of painting.

So much was this so, that, until quite lately, the names of two Flemings, Jehan and François Clouet, were used much as the name of Holbein was used in England, as a generic label for all 16th-century portraits.

Of the works formerly attributed to Jehan, only one in England, that of *Claude d'Urfé*, at Hampton Court, is certainly by him, and the well-known portrait of *Francis I*, in the Louvre, is now said to be after an original by Joos van Cleve (the *Master of the Death of the Virgin*) : but Joos van Cleve was equally a Fleming painting for a Frenchman ; and we can see at once the result of the combination. It is as though the painter had been made to feel that brilliance was all that was asked of him, and though the picture is full of vitality, it is remote, the portrait of a man who does not intend to reveal himself.

The works of Corneille de Lyon, a Dutchman, working in Lyon from 1536, and naturalized a Frenchman in 1547, are often ascribed to François Clouet.

The younger Clouet's portrait of **Elizabeth of Austria*, in the Louvre, is likewise all brilliance of detail and rich-

ness of colour ; the hands are beautifully posed and daintily drawn ; but the face, though delicately modelled and full of character, is inhumanly cold in expression, neither asking nor giving sympathy. There is neither the gentle gravity of van der Weyden, nor the tenderness of Memlinc, nor the human interest of Mabuse. The native Flemish freshness has given place to an unyielding correctitude. Even the *Lady in a Bath* (possibly Diane de Poitiers), in the collection of Sir Herbert Cook at Doughty House, Richmond, though it is livelier in expression and more suggestive of movement, relies rather upon brilliance of style than upon human interest. It is the work of a man deeply impressed by the idea that the art of painting matters more than the joy of painting.

Yet, in spite of the formality and logical precision of the French attitude of mind, there is in the French character a strong vein of natural and unsophisticated love of simple pleasures and natural beauties : and from time to time, in the history of French painting, this has asserted itself : it was seen in the lively miniatures of the 14th century, and in the tenderness of the Franco-Flemish period of religious painting ; it was very evident in the 18th century in the work of Chardin and Fragonard : and its first exponents in the 17th century were the brothers Antoine and Louis Le Nain, who were born at Laon in 1588 and 1593 respectively, and died in 1648, the year of their admission to the recently formed Académie Royale. Their subjects are akin to those of the then rising Dutch school of painters of peasant and tavern scenes, though they have none of the Dutchman's elaborate composition : indeed, their work gives the impression that they were deliberately avoiding all subtlety of arrangement, and their pictures are often scarcely more than the representation, on a very small scale, of a row of dumpy peasant figures ; yet they are extraordinarily alive, and almost pathetically inelegant, as though the artists were seeking to emphasize their utter difference from the formal beauty of official art. The colour of their little pictures, too, is the colour of warm sunshine, and the shadows are as full of colour as



CLOUET
Elizabeth of Austria
(French)

the lights : the painters relied, in fact, upon such beauty as could be found in actual life of a kind that was commonly reckoned in their time as lying outside the province of beauty altogether : and it is remarkable evidence of the Frenchman's quick perception of the quality of order, even when it is applied in quite a new way, in a work of art, that the work of the Le Nain brothers was highly valued in their own day, although they left no successors in their peculiar style.

Singularly enough, the great Venetian painters produced no reaction in France, nor, later, did the work of Rubens, despite the patronage of Maria de' Medici, for whom he painted in 1619 a magnificent series of pictures for the decoration of the Luxembourg Palace. The Frenchman, having his own genius, but not yet having found a truly native means of expressing it, refused to be led into the error of copying the means that belonged to a genius not his own.

The first French Painter who was able to feel the true spirit of the Italian Renaissance, and to build upon his study of that art an art of his own, was Nicolas Poussin ; and the whole of his greatest work was produced far from the cramping atmosphere of his native country.

Born at Les Andelys, in Normandy, he was inspired from his boyhood with the desire to paint, and made his way to Paris in 1612, where he learned the elements of the craft from a Flemish portrait-painter ; but it was in the study of engravings after Raphael and Titian that he found the greater profit, for in these he was able to find the teaching that he desired, in the principles of great design. In 1624 he went to Rome, where he studied in the Academy of Domenichino ; but the severity and grandeur of his drawing are derived directly from his study of antique sculpture. To him, as to Mantegna a century and a half before him, the clean-cut, quiet, monumental forms of the ancient art were completely satisfying, and from 1624 to 1640 he scarcely thought of colour at all, but toned all down to a prevailing golden brown, through which the greens of the landscape backgrounds and the flesh tints of

his figures show dimly, while strong light and shadow emphasize the modelling of the forms and the studious balance of the composition. His subjects were for the most part Biblical and classical, and though they often represent lively action, they have the air of a sculptured relief, rather than that of an actual representation of a living scene. This is very noticeable in the two splendid Bacchanalian scenes in the National Gallery, London (42 and 62) which he painted in Paris for Cardinal Richelieu, when he returned there for a year in 1640-41. He was soon obliged, however, to return to Rome, owing to the jealousy of the more orthodox artists who governed taste in Paris, and it was after his return there that he painted the magnificent *Shepherds in Arcadia*, now in the Louvre, and the *Dance to the Music of Time*, in the Wallace Collection. His return to France seems to have awakened his natural sense of colour, for these pictures are far softer and more varied in colour than his earlier works, and are more suggestive of air and space: indeed, towards the end of his life, he seems almost to have felt that the quiet severity of classical design was not adequate to express his feeling for solemn beauty, and he painted, perhaps merely as experiments, some landscapes in which the figures—though they still give a “story-label” to the picture, as custom demanded—are quite a minor interest; it is the dark massing of shadows, the sudden gleam of light, and the fading of distant forms of trees and hills into a haze of colour, which are the main interest of these pictures, of which the *Phocion* (N.G. 40), painted in 1648, is one of the earliest examples. It is indeed strange that Poussin should have forestalled by nearly two centuries his fellow-countrymen of the Barbizon School in the painting of landscape as an expression of personal feeling, living as he did at a time when personal feeling was the last thing that any well-conducted French painter was expected to possess.

Gaspard Dughet (1613-1675), commonly called Gaspard Poussin, who was born in Rome and passed the whole of his life in Italy, was the brother-in-law and pupil of Nicolas; and, though he followed the custom of putting figures into

his landscapes to give them a Biblical or classical label, he was to all intents and purposes purely a landscape painter. Though the distances and skies of his pictures are inclined to be hard, and his painting of clouds is showy rather than truthful, he shows much genuine feeling for the beauty of landscape. There are many of his works in the National Gallery, London, and a fine *Falls of Tivoli* in the Wallace Collection.

A contemporary of the two Poussins, who completes the remarkable trio of French landscape painters in Rome, was Claude Gelée, (1600-1682), who, from the province of his birth, is known as Claude le Lorrain. It is said that, being a pastry-cook, he first went to Rome to learn the art of sugar-icing: if that be true, it is very fortunate that he took to landscape painting instead, for if he had not done so, the world would have been the poorer.

He was the pupil of Tassi, but was much influenced by the Dutchman Paul Bril, and by Adam Elsenheimer, an imaginative German landscape painter, and the two outstanding characteristics of his work are imagination and the love of light. Indeed, with the exception of his great contemporary Velazquez (whose work he probably never saw, though he was in Rome when Velazquez visited Italy in 1629 and 1648) he may be said to be the first painter who ever tried to paint light itself in its progress through the air.

Though he painted much in the open air, his landscapes are highly artificial, being very carefully composed, reminding us, in their symmetrical balance, of stage scenery. The dark foreground, with strong detail, of trees or classic buildings, the lighter middle distance, and the pale distance of hills or the horizon of the sea melting into the golden sunlight that glows from the centre of the picture, are placed so as to suit the main purpose of the painting, which is always to represent the movement of that light from the distance, forward to the foreground: and his colouring, almost always in the scheme of a golden centre, fading to blue above and from blue to green below, is quite arbitrary—a formula again, as befits a Frenchman, but a gloriously right and successful formula. In describing it,

I have described his *Embarkation of the Queen of Sheba*, in the National Gallery, London (N.G. 14), his *Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca* (N.G. 12)—(the two pictures to which Turner acknowledged his great debt), and indeed every picture that he ever painted; and yet there is no dull sameness about them, for sunlight is new with every new object upon which it falls.

In the meantime, portraiture in France still remained largely in Flemish hands. From his arrival in Paris in 1609 till his death in 1622 Frans Pourbus the Younger held a prominent place, and Philippe de Champaigne (1602–1674), who was a native of Brussels, was decidedly the most brilliant portrait painter in France in his time: his religious pictures are carefully correct in composition and drawing, in the “classic” style prescribed by the official taste, but his portraits are magnificent in design, rich in colour, delicate in detail, and strong in the rendering of character; indeed, he made the very best use of the rules of the art, and shows us that it is in fact possible for a conscientiously academic painter to be a great artist. He became, in 1648, an original member of the Académie Royale, together with Eustache Le Sueur (1619–1655) and Le Brun (1619–1690), the former a decorative painter of a Raphaelesque sweetness, and genuine feeling, but little strength, and the latter one of the few admirers of Nicolas Poussin in Paris, and a man of great force of character, although not a great painter. The Académie, while it tended to standardize painting, at least insured that the standard of craft should be very high, and whatever may be said against French painting from this time onward, we are bound to admit slovenly workmanship has never been one of its faults. Even the great opponent of its foundation, Pierre Mignard (1610–1695), who spent many years in Rome, was an exquisite craftsman, from whose name the word “*mignardise*,” meaning delicate finish, was coined. This respect for good craftsmanship is plainly seen in the work of the two great French portraitists, Nicolas de Largillière (1656–1746) and Hyacinthe Rigaud (1659–1743). The former, born in Paris, had some training in Antwerp,

became a member of the Académie in 1686, and was for a time an assistant of Sir Peter Lely in England. The latter, a native of Perpignan, in the extreme south of France, entered the Académie in 1700. They represent the best academic tradition, and their work is dignified, solid both in drawing and colour, reserved in expression, and easy though formal in composition. Both had remarkable skill in handling portrait-groups. That of *Louis XIV and his Family*, in the Wallace Collection (122), by Largillière, and the *Lulli and his Fellow-Musicians*, in the National Gallery, London (2081), by Rigaud, are good examples. Although both men lived far into the 18th century, their style remained to the end that of the 17th; the more thorough his training is, the less adaptable a painter is likely to be. Moreover, it was in the reign of Louis XIV, whose Court Painter Rigaud was, that the prestige of France rose to its greatest height, and these two painters, surviving into an inferior age, perpetuated the dignity of the greater days that they had outlived.

Even in the reign of Louis XIV there are some queer contrasts in French painting. Side by side with the quiet dignity of the great portraits, we have the sumptuous ostentation of great decorative paintings, the dainty but not always delicate fancies of the "Fêtes Galantes," and the lively movement of sporting pictures of dogs and game, such as those of Jean Baptiste Oudry (1685-1753).

Jean François de Troy (1679-1752), and François le Moine (1688-1737), were the foremost among the decorative painters. The latter worked on a large scale in an Italianate style, using the bold foreshortening necessary to the painter of vaults and ceilings. His drawing is fine, but often forced and affected: de Troy was a painter of far wider range, for not only was he a designer of great decorations similar to those of Le Moine, but also a painter of small landscape scenes with many figures, of the kind originated by Watteau and called "Fêtes Galantes"—that is, pictures of great ladies and gentlemen playing at country life—and he made many designs for Gobelins tapestry. Though his "Fêtes Galantes" never approached the charm

of the work of Watteau, of whom he was to some extent an imitator, they are lively and pleasing pictures, full of action, and fresh in colour.

Antoine Watteau (1684-1721) possessed far more than charm. He possessed pure genius. He invented, for the pleasure of an age of hopeless insincerity and frivolity, an art that represented those deplorable qualities in their most superficially attractive aspect, and yet managed to make them the means of expressing his own love of powerful colour and orderly design. He managed to convey to his unthinking patrons all the airy grace and charming unreality of their own wasteful and wasted lives, and yet to fill his pictures with an underlying quality of strength and sincerity; though he cannot rightly be called a landscape painter, he filled his dream-gardens and fairy groves with the soft glow of subdued sunlight and airy space; and though a satirist is the last thing that he was or desired to be, there is something almost tragic in the manly strength of his men, and in the glowing womanhood of his women, their bodies disguised and bedizened in the elaborate trappings, their true emotions in the elaborate and self-conscious posturing, of a life of make-believe. He is the only painter in history who has ever achieved the paradox of making prettiness the means of expressing power. He is also one of the very few French painters who achieved success without undergoing a strictly orthodox training. He studied, first in his native town of Valenciennes, and then at Paris, under several teachers, of whom Claude Gillot, a painter of mythological subjects, was the latest; but it was from the works of Rubens at the Luxembourg that he first learned his wonderful control of colour, and he borrowed from them at intervals all his life; and in the half-wild gardens of the Luxembourg, he found his feeling for landscape. After 1712, when he became acquainted with Crozat's great collection of drawings and paintings by the Venetian masters, his work became less Flemish in feeling and in subject. The art of Titian and Paul Veronese taught him richer colour and greater breadth of composition, and under its influence he became the purest and most sensitive

draughtsman of his age. By 1717 he had reached the fullness of his powers, and his *Départ pour Cythère*, in the Louvre, the work with which, in that year, he gained admission to the Académie, is a miracle of stately composition, gay yet delicate colour, and shimmering atmosphere. In 1721 he was dead of consumption, and it is the tragedy of his short, restless, doomed life that underlies the seeming lightness of all his work. His **Gilles*, in the Louvre, *Gilles and his Family*, in the Wallace Collection, and the Italian Comedians of his "concert" pictures, which belong to his later years, are tired people, making merry with sad hearts.

The greatest tragedy of all, however, is the fact that he set a fashion. The surface charm of his work had caught the fancy of the Court, and a host of imitators followed hard upon the heels of his success. We have already seen that de Troy lost no time in imitating him, but his closest follower was his friend Nicolas Lancret (1690-1743), who studied with Gillot, Watteau's former master, and copied Watteau so closely as to bring their friendship to an end; and his own pupil, Jean-Baptiste-Joseph Pater (1696-1736), like himself, a native of Valenciennes; he quarrelled with Pater also, but repented almost at the end of his life, and spent his last strength in making amends by teaching Pater all he could of his incomparable art.

Much of Lancret's work is so like that of Watteau as to have been mistaken for it even in the lifetime of both: but it lacks the strength of Watteau and, in comparison, is flimsy both in colour and drawing, and is really as shallow in feeling as Watteau appears at first sight to be; and for all its apparent daintiness, it is often wooden and even awkward in design. The superficially pretty **Music Lesson*, in the Louvre, has all these defects; but in justice to Lancret, it must be admitted that after Watteau's death he grew more independent, his drawing becoming freer and his colour bolder. The **Spring* and **Summer*, in the Hermitage at Petrograd, though careless in composition and inclined to be harsh in colour, are much more vigorous than the *Music Lesson*. A late work, the *Girl in a Kitchen*

(Wallace Collection 378), has a pleasant simplicity of subject which prepares us for the more serious taste of Chardin.

Of Pater we need say no more than that he was a faithful pupil of Watteau to the end of his life, and that he worked himself to death at forty, striving to make enough money to retire. His work is skilful, graceful, and empty, and often descends more obviously than that of Watteau or Lancret to the loose taste of the period.

The four remaining great figures of the Old Régime in France are Boucher, Nattier, Chardin, and Fragonard, (with Greuze as a kind of postscript to the story), and Claude-Joseph Vernet (1714-1789) standing apart as the sole French landscapist, and the most powerful marine painter of the century. For twenty years, from 1733 to 1753, he lived in Italy, and it was his voyage thither which turned him towards painting the sea: his Italian landscapes also gained him a high reputation, and to him the credit is due of encouraging the English painter, Richard Wilson, to persevere with landscape painting, and to share his own success in Rome. In 1753 he returned to France, was admitted to the Académie, and spent nine years on a great series of paintings of the ports of France. His colour, though often sombre, is luminous, and his composition is both dramatic and dignified. There is a fine example of his work in the Wallace Collection (135. *Rocky coast, with Shipping in a Storm*), and a typical Italian *Landscape* at Leeds.

François Boucher (1703-1770) combined into a style peculiarly his own, and triumphantly expressive of the refined vulgarity of his age, the decorative art of Le Moine, whose pupil he was, and the "galanterie" of Watteau, whose works he studied closely. He visited Italy for a short time, returned to France in 1731, was received at the Académie in 1734, and succeeded Carle van Loo as first painter to the King in 1765, when he also became Director of the Academy and Inspector of the Tapestry manufactory at Beauvais. Thus, largely through the friendship of Madame de Pompadour, he was as firmly established as possible, as the official representative of the taste of the time.

It is the fashion to decry Boucher. His work has been called careless and flashy, and the fact that he worked without a model is quoted against him. True, his colour is cold and unreal, with a porcelain-like over-tone of blue, broken by violent masses of hard scarlet; his drawing, in the immense variety of attitude and movement that he portrays, is sometimes at fault; but there is a splendid confidence in every line, an absolute sense of decorative balance, and a heedless, impudent gaiety in the attitudes and expressions of his figures, which disarm criticism; it is all superficial, but it is meant to be so. In France, in the reign of Louis-Quinze, it was only the surface of life that was fit to be seen. The Wallace Collection contains the most splendid group of his pictures in the world, and among them the two great compositions, the *Rising of the Sun* and the *Setting of the Sun*, are perhaps his masterpieces. In both of these, Thetis is probably a portrait of *Madame de Pompadour. In pure portraiture he was not always so successful, as the portrait of the same lady, also in the Wallace Collection (418), shows. In this, there is no room for his natural exuberance, and without it, he is a little dull and commonplace, though always brilliant in execution.

Moreover, when Boucher appeared on the scene, Jean-Marc Nattier (1685-1766) was already established as the greatest portrait-painter of the day. He was the pupil of his father, also a portrait-painter, and, on a visit to The Hague in 1715, painted a portrait of Peter the Great of Russia. Returning to Paris in 1718, he became painter-in-ordinary to the Royal Princesses, and painted many portraits of them in various mythological characters. His drawing is clean and sure, his modelling is brilliant and sometimes rather hard, and his colour, like that of Boucher, cold and artificial; but his portraits are surprisingly full of individuality and subtle suggestion of character. Very notable in this respect is the portrait of the *Comtesse de Tillières* (Wallace Collection 453), who was noted for her piety: both in attitude and expression, this lady in blue is the very picture of sweet and gentle serenity. If Nattier had

lived in a less artificial age, he might well have earned a nobler reputation. As it is, he must rely largely on his craftsmanship, which is superb.

Nattier and Boucher were the last great exponents of this age of glittering artificiality ; already, in their time, a greater artist than either of them was giving expression to a new seriousness, a noble simplicity, which were a forecast of the coming change that was in time to sweep away their whole world, after he and they were gone. Jean Baptiste Siméon Chardin (1699-1779), with no better teaching than he could gain from such painters as Cages, Coypel, and J. P. van Loo, deliberately turned aside from the heartless brilliance of the Court, to paint the simple beauty of common things and common folk. He has all the refinement of drawing and balance of design which are proper to a Frenchman, but he adds to these a quietude and soft richness of colour, and an understanding of the natural dignity of form, that are new to French painting ; and he devotes these great qualities to the painting of a bottle, a loaf of bread, and a tumbler of wine (N.G. 1258), to a servant in the kitchen, seated at her task of peeling potatoes (**The Cook*, Leichtenstein Collection, Vienna), or a girl drawing water from a great copper "fontaine" in the scullery (N.G. 1664). His painting of a sign for a barber-surgeon, representing the surgeon dressing the wound of a duellist, drew crowds in a Paris street. His was the first French painting that appealed to the common folk ; and in its spirit it is graver and more dignified than any before it. He had a pupil, Jean Honoré Fragonard (1732-1806), who soon left him to study with Boucher, and thence travelled to Italy, to study the late Venetian painters, whose vigorous drawing and composition attracted his lively mind. In many of his pictures, with their Watteau-like use of landscape setting, their vivacious figures full of movement, and their care-free subject, Fragonard seems at first sight to surpass Boucher himself in sheer frivolity : but there is a difference. The frivolity of Fragonard is light-hearted, not heartless ; however daring he may be, he never sinks to mere vulgarity ; and again and again we



CHARDIN
The Admonition
(French)

are startled by the touch of real tenderness, the unexpected sweetness of his point of view. In the charming **Stolen Kiss*, in the Hermitage at Petrograd, the whole story is so delightfully told as to capture at once our sympathy with the lovers—for they are real lovers, not soulless painter's puppets. Through a half-open door we see the further room and the dull and elderly card-party from which this tall graceful girl has escaped for a stolen moment, and as she leans towards the French window through which her lover steps to kiss her, so gently, on the cheek, she looks backward in alarm, and snatches up from a little table the light scarf that, in another moment, will be her excellent excuse for having left the room. This is real life, not empty masquerade; and so it is no surprise to find the same painter producing that exquisite study of the simple beauty of peasant life and golden sunshine, the *Happy Mother*, in the National Gallery, London (N.G. 2620), and the delightful babies in the *Schoolmistress*, in the Wallace Collection. Moreover, Fragonard was a very great painter. His colour has a warmth and a delicacy that Boucher never achieved, and his sense of form is exquisite. He is poetic as Watteau was poetic, for he has both delicacy of craft and delicacy of feeling; and though he survived the French Revolution, he could never adapt himself to its new ideas, which had no room for gentleness or laughter, and he died in poverty and obscurity, an artist who had outlived his time.

Jean Baptiste Greuze (1725-1805) was a painter who had neither the dignity of Chardin nor the poetic sincerity of Fragonard; but he was sensitive enough to feel and to express the charm of simplicity in a society that was beginning to be bored by excess of frivolous pleasure-seeking. Innocence is the theme of all his pictures of pretty young girls, but it is a very self-conscious sort of innocence. "Methinks the lady doth protest too much" comes irresistibly into our minds, in the presence of these coquettishly modest young persons. Their modesty is the fashion of the moment, and if the fashion changed, they would have no difficulty in following its vagaries. Never-

theless, there is very real decorative feeling in the simple design and fresh yet restrained colour of his work; the **Milkmaid* and the famous **Cruche Cassée*, both in the Louvre, are admirable examples of graceful composition. Greuze scarcely aimed at more than prettiness, but he achieved that with unerring instinct; and in his occasional portraits of boys, like that of a *Boy with a Dog*, in the Wallace Collection, or the *Boy with a Lesson Book*, in the National Gallery of Scotland, he surprises us by the way in which he drops his affectations and becomes a sincere and sympathetic painter of character, though neither of these pictures has the lovable reality of Fragonard's *Portrait of a Boy as Pierrot*, in the Wallace Collection. Like Fragonard, Greuze outlived his time. The French Revolution, that was not stemmed by the well-meaning attempts at compromise of Louis XVI, but made him pay with his life for the meaningless life of Louis XV, had no tolerance for an art that tried to express a compromise between the extravagance of the Court and the simplicity of humble life: and when Greuze died in 1805, there were many who had forgotten that he was alive so long.

The art of the Revolution, however, was not at all a simple thing. The Revolution itself was not a simple thing. It was begun by men who had ideals of liberty, based upon reason and philosophy; it let loose a people without ideals, and so unused to liberty that it could only use its new freedom to destroy the old order, not to create a new one; and it was only slowly that a new order was brought back out of chaos, by the substitution of the fetters of unrelenting reason for those of unreasonable caprice.

Under the old régime a few people had a soulless good time, and a great many people had no chance to find out that they had souls at all; the Revolution began with the object of awakening the soul of the people, and ended in nobody being able to call his soul his own.

Therefore, instead of being simple and natural and "popular," the art of the New Republic was as formal and orderly as a row of well-drilled soldiers on parade, for it was the product of a people which after a brief spell of



FRAGONARD
The Stolen Kiss
(*French*)

anarchy had been hammered into decency by a discipline infinitely more rigid than that which had oppressed it before, and more tolerable only because it was based on a logical theory of justice.

Jacques-Louis David (1748-1825), himself a prominent figure in the Revolution, and twice almost one of its victims, had already, in the reign of Louis XVI, arrived at the artistic expression of this fanatical worship of discipline. Five years in Rome had filled him with admiration for the severity of "the antique," and in 1783, four years after his return from Italy, he painted for Louis XVI the picture of *The Oath of the Horatii*, a huge picture in which there is so much order that there is no life. The three Horatii on the one side, and their father on the other, strike admirably balanced attitudes; they wear as little as possible, in order that the carefully correct modelling of their limbs and bodies may be well displayed; and the colouring is cold, harsh and unreal. It would not be a surprise to see a row of footlights along the front of the picture, for it is worse than theatrical, it is stagey; and his *Sabine Women*, also in the Louvre, is even more so; it is more like a ballet than a battle, and even the modelling of the limbs has been made, deliberately, less emphatic than in the *Horatii*, so as to approach more nearly to "the true beauty of the antique." During the Revolution, David painted a *Death of Marat*, which shows that he could occasionally express real feeling, but went back to pure classicism, not only because he preferred it, but also because it was safer, in those troubled times, to avoid political subjects; and under Napoleon, of whom he was a fervent admirer, he found in the ostentation of the Empire a subject which suited his grandiose style.

Yet, beneath all this dull pomp and formality, David had a very real feeling for design; and on the rare occasions when his interest in his subject is lively enough to soften his severity to simplicity, he can even show charm. His portrait of **Madame Recamier* is simplicity itself, classical, but not severe, gracefully natural in the pose of the white-robed, bare-footed figure half-reclining on the slender couch: and in the almost total absence of colour—it is all

white and grey, with the exception of the flesh tints, and a little yellow in the couch—it conveys a really exquisite quietude.

The fall of Napoleon sent David into exile, and before he died the reaction against the classicism which he had imposed on French art as its only law had already begun; but in his pupil Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres (1780–1867), he left behind him a master of pure line, and of academic correctitude. It is only occasionally, and in portraits, that Ingres shows the least vivacity, and studied grace is the keynote of his work. This is seen at its very best in the famous picture **La Source* (the Spring), in the Louvre. In this picture, line and design are everything, and the nude figure of a girl, though perfect in these respects, is not intended to be anything more than a symbol of purity and grace.

But already the doom of classicism was at hand, and even while Paris praised the classic works of David, and Ingres and Prud'hon—a kind of chastened Boucher, this last—they flocked to see the terrible yet sublime *Rade de la Meduse* of Gericault (1791–1824), who, though a pupil of David, could not subdue to classic form his wonderful realistic power. Though this picture, of the dead and dying piled upon the raft in the midst of the waves, is dreadful in its realization of the tragic scene, it is superb, even stately in composition, and monumental in drawing; and not only Gericault, but Decamps and Horace Vernet and Delacroix, for all their realism, are true descendants of the classic school in this respect at least, that they were great draughtsmen, and their vigorous battle-pieces and historic paintings never for one moment depart from the rules of true pictorial design, or even show much advance in the application of those rules. Their colour is richer, their subjects are more varied and studied more directly from life, and their appeal is more obviously to contemporary interests, but they still retain much of the decorative character which can be traced back right through the 18th and 17th centuries, to the classic designs of Martin Fréminet in the 16th century.

It was the appearance of two Englishmen in the Salon of 1824 which first turned French art into entirely new channels, and prepared the way for the intensely personal and individual French art of the impressionists of 1860. The landscapes of Constable and Bonington took Paris by surprise. The freshness of them, and their simplicity, as records of things seen, revealed to French painters the tremendous possibilities of landscape as a means to the painter of expressing his own feelings without regard to tradition. The men who linked themselves loosely together under the name of the "Barbizon School," from the place in the Ile de France where they painted, were of widely different training and temperament from one another. All they have in common is their use of landscape or subjects of peasant life as their source of inspiration. From the gentle Corot, trained in the classic school of figure painting, to Jean François Millet, the peasant who found his training as he might, in poverty and want, is a far cry, and no two men ever painted more differently from one another. The one with misty meadows, and wind-whispering grey willows, and fairy wreaths of dancing figures among the stems of tall trees, is a dreamer in the midst of life (**Souvenir de Morte Fontaine*, Louvre; and **The Woodgatherers*, N.G. 2625): the other, with the patient dignity of his stooping gleaners, the hard vigour of his toiling sawyers, the grand unconscious rhythm of his striding sower, or the deep hush of worship of the bowed figures set against the evening sky, as the Angelus rings out across the fields (**L'Angélus*, Louvre), is one who worked to live and lived to work, and even while he wearied, felt the pride of weariness. Courbet's vastness, the restless waves of Boudin's tumbled seas, the dramatic flash of sunshine through the forest that is painted by Diaz de la Peña, and Daubigny's fresh bold vigour expressed in green meadows or grey barges, are, each of them, each man's own language, his own character revealed in his manner of seeing the world in which he lived.

With the exception of Chardin, and, in rare moments, Fragonard, these Barbizon painters were the first Frenchmen to treat painting as a thing coming from within rather than

as a thing to be acquired from without ; that is, as a means to an end, and that end the expression of themselves. Each created for himself his own manner of painting, to suit his own manner of seeing ; and each one's manner of seeing was determined by his outlook on life as a whole, by his character, in fact. Therefore it is rather strange, and yet perfectly natural, that a succeeding generation of Frenchmen should have set to work to build up a new set of rules, to govern once more their own way of seeing from the outside. One, Manet, sought in the uncompromising and unimaginative realism of the Spaniards, Velazquez and Goya, the absolute truth of rendering things seen, and his work, cold and harsh in colour and often puzzling in its design, has a singular dignity, in spite of a choice of subject far from dignified. Another, Claude Monet, looked for truth more literally still, trying to pull light itself to pieces, setting side by side tiny flecks of prismatic colours, so that in his pictures we see rocks and waves and all other forms only as through a glimmering haze of light. To him, the first true impressionist, the eye was concerned only with light ; it had no affair with the mass or volume or weight of things, for it saw, not the things themselves, but only the light reflected from them and filling the atmosphere around them.

These are scientific theories, and it was characteristic of the logical attitude of the Frenchman towards the facts of life, that he sought to govern even his own everyday experience of seeing by the scientific laws of the process of sight, and to set down what he saw in accordance with those laws. It is the keynote to the understanding of all French art, this passion for a code of unalterable laws, and we find it running through all French artistic history, from its very beginning, when the Avigonese painters learned the formulæ of Simone Martini off by heart, and used them for a century without change, down to the present day, when, though each painter is a law unto himself, each one respects and keeps the law himself has made.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ENGLISH SCHOOL

THE study of the history of painting in England is made very difficult by the fact that, during the 16th and 17th centuries, almost all church wall-paintings were destroyed for religious reasons: nowhere else in Europe has this destruction been so completely carried out, though in the Netherlands many fine pictures were from time to time destroyed for similar reasons.

However, England was at no time a painting country, like Italy or the Netherlands, and there can have been but few altar-pieces in English churches. Even the wall-paintings in churches were for the most part purely decorative and symbolic, and, at the very time at which the greatest Italian masterpieces were being produced by Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo and Raphael, English wall-painting had sunk to a very low level indeed.

The earliest English paintings of any consequence were, like those of the Netherlands, miniatures in books, and from the 9th to the 13th century English work of this kind stood very high indeed, not only in this country, but also abroad. It was lively in drawing and rich and varied in colour, and, from the point of view of illustration, vigorous and dramatic: but the break between this early art, and the art of painting as it was practised from the 16th century onwards, is so complete that, for all practical purposes, we may begin our history of English painting with the portraiture of the 16th century.

The history of German, Dutch and Flemish painting has already shown us that foreign painters were welcomed in England during the 16th century, and indeed, during the whole of the Tudor period. The English painters did no more than imitate with greater or less success the work of Holbein, Mor, Gheeraedts and Zuccherò, and the host of minor foreigners who made a handsome living out of the fact that a sudden demand for portraiture had sprung up in England, and that there were no English painters capable of meeting it.

It would be scarcely too much to say that Hans Holbein was the founder of the first English School of portrait-painting. His work had all the qualities that the Englishman sought in a portrait—likeness, detail, fine colour, and solid, thorough craftsmanship. It is true that from the reign of Edward IV onwards, Englishmen had tried, very occasionally, to copy the style of the Flemish painters, but they had not got very near to success; the few English portraits of the 15th century are very poor things, and the names of their painters are lost. It was not until the Court of Henry VIII secured the services, and the continuous residence in this country, of this very great painter, that any English painter had the chance to serve an apprenticeship to anyone who could teach him the craft of painting, and, what is more important, that of draughtsmanship.

There is a wonderful collection at Windsor Castle, of pencil drawings by Holbein, small half-length (or less) portraits of people about the Court of Henry VIII, which afford a fine example of the way in which a really great draughtsman can simplify his subject, reducing it to the smallest possible number of lines, and yet retaining everything that is essential to a striking likeness.

The reason of the sudden demand in England for portraits is peculiar and has nothing whatever to do with a love of beauty or of art. It arose first, from the collapse of the feudal system, under Henry VII, and second, from the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII. These events seem to have little to do with the matter, until we remember that, under the feudal system, and especially during the last three-quarters of a century of its existence, when the country was almost continuously at war either at home or abroad, the appearance of a man was of less importance than the power that he represented. Every individual in the land was linked with every other, either as leader or follower; and the banner of the overlord, or the shield and crest of the knight, were, so to speak, the only portrait that he needed. Men knew and followed his device, who had never seen, and might never see, his face.

When Henry VII defeated Richard III at Bosworth, he realized that he had done so by means of a fighting strength that was not his own, but that of certain great lords, whose followers were attached, not to the royal person, but to the banner of their own overlord. He realized that the Battle of Bosworth might well have gone the other way, if Stanley and all Stanley's men had not come over to his side on the eve of battle, and that what had happened once to his advantage might happen again to his downfall; so, to prevent so painful an accident, he took away the power of the great feudal lords, and made the Crown the centre of all allegiance of fighting men.

So, lordships mattered less, and the King's favour mattered more. The man who, under the old system, had an army at his back because he was the inheritor of an ancient name, found that it was safer to be in Royal favour than to own a hundred lordships; and those who had found their safety in the protection of the fess and crosslets of Beauchamp or the sickle-badge of Hungerford, learned to follow, not the banner of their lord, but the man whom the King delighted to honour, whether he were Stanley or Neville, Howard or Audley, and to desert the man who lay under the shadow of the King's displeasure. Thus, the individual became more important than the family, and so a man's face mattered more to him and to other people than his coat-of-arms.

Moreover, Henry VII himself started the fashion. Feeling that his claim to the throne on grounds of descent was rather shadowy, he ruled rather by personality than by right; and, being a man of some artistic feeling, he introduced artists from Italy into this country, who set a new standard in such matters to English ideas, and, both in painting and in sculpture, have left us the first portraits of an English King that can be regarded as anything like accurate and individual representations. The tomb statue of Henry VII, in Westminster Abbey, is by Torrigiano, and is a real portrait; and certain painted portraits of Henry VII which have come down to us, though the artists are

unknown, are not mere symbolic pictures of "A King," but actual portraits of a man.

When Henry VIII came to the throne, the personal vanity of a man who, in his youth, was accounted (strange as it may seem to us) the handsomest monarch in Europe, was an added reason for the encouragement of portraiture in England. Moreover, the relations between England and the Continent now became for the first time more diplomatic than warlike: thus the personality of the King, who, with all his obvious faults, was a very great diplomat, became important abroad as well as at home, and his portrait was multiplied for presentation to foreign monarchs with whom he had dealings.

More than ever before, Royal favouritism became the sure road to advancement, and the King's Court was made up of people chosen for their personal qualities, good or bad, rather than for the ancient standing of their families; and since imitation is flattery, portrait-painting became a fashion of the Court.

With the destruction of the power of the monasteries, immense lands and revenues were at the King's disposal as rewards to those who had done him personal service; and many great families of to-day were founded in Henry VIII's time by men who had little or no ancestry to look back upon. They were "the first of their line," and they too had their portraits painted, that their descendants might know what manner of man it was to whose example they had to live up (or whom they had to live down, as the case might be!)

It was for Henry VIII during one of his brief intervals of widower's estate, that Holbein painted the wonderful portrait of the **Duchess of Milan* that is now in the National Gallery, London (2475): and, if we place side by side with it his equally wonderful, but utterly different portrait of **King Henry VIII* himself, now at Althorp House, we shall see at once how the skilful German has adapted his art to the needs of a people who had no idea that a portrait was capable of being a beautiful picture as well. The King's portrait *is* a beautiful picture, but that is merely by the way. It can

just as well be treated as a catalogue of features and a record of clothes : and that is all that English people seem to have wanted for very nearly a hundred years onward from that time.

Nearly every great family in England whose greatness dates from those days possesses one or more portraits by, or attributed to Holbein, and many of these must have been painted by the Netherlanders and Germans, and the few Englishmen, who were painting either in the workshop of Holbein himself, or in slavish imitation of his style : but the only Englishman who added anything to the craft that he learned from Holbein was John Bettes, who is known to us only by a single portrait, that of *William Buttes*, the King's physician, now in the National Gallery, London (N.G. 1496). While the minute and careful drawing of the features is definitely derived from the example of Holbein, the picture as a whole has a certain freedom and animation, an "instantaneous" look, which is equally definitely English. It is plain that Bettes was personally interested in his work—so much so that, in painting the reddish fur of the Doctor's collar, he quite forgot to be an imitator of Holbein, and struck his brush this way and that, regardless of minute detail of drawing, and so got texture and colour, without any great regard for form. The painting of this fur is as free, as modern, as the painting by Landseer of the coat of a bloodhound.

At an Exhibition held recently at the Royal Academy in London were shown some canvas "panels" of English painting of 15th-century date, from the collection of the Society of Antiquaries, representing life-size figures of Old Testament kings and prophets : they were a revelation of the wonderful freedom and rich, quiet colour-sense of the English painter, and of his almost equally wonderful disregard of accurate drawing. From the very first to the very last, in our study of English painting, we shall find that this is the keynote of the English artist's point of view. It is only with painful labour that the Englishman is able to draw correctly : the great English draughtsmen could be counted on the fingers of one hand ; but many English

painters who could only draw badly have painted pictures that were vivid in characterization and glorious in colour : therefore, since portraiture demands the accurate drawing of features, the first century of English progress is painfully slow ; and because the English public cared little or nothing for the beauty, as *pictures*, of the portraits which were the only paintings that it wanted, it cared even less for the artist who painted them, and the vast majority of English portraits of the 16th century are by men whose names have been forgotten : where the names have been preserved, they are almost always those of foreigners, like Johannes Corvus and Marc Gheeraedts, and Zuccherò.

The persecution of Protestants in the Netherland dominions of Spain, and the national rivalry existing between England and Spain in the reign of Elizabeth, naturally brought many Dutchmen, and among them Dutch painters, into England, and when the Tudor line ended, and James I of England and VI of Scotland came to the English throne, the trade of portrait-painting in England was almost wholly in Dutch hands. The Court Painter of James I was Daniel Mytens, a thoroughly competent but uninspired Dutchman, who could paint a good likeness of a man and his clothes, down to the last waistcoat button ; and it was not till Charles I succeeded to the crown of England, that the idea of being interested in anything but a mere likeness dawned on English minds.

Charles I, while he was yet Prince Charles, had visited the Court of Spain with his boon-companion the Duke of Buckingham. It is on record that the young Spanish painter Velazquez, then at the beginning of his great career, started to paint his portrait, but it was never finished : but if Charles gained nothing else from the Spanish visit, he had the opportunity of seeing there the glorious collection of the King of Spain, rich in the works of the greatest of the Venetian and Flemish painters ; and it may well be that it was this glimpse of the beauties of painting which started both him and the Duke of Buckingham upon the collection of paintings. However this may be, these two ill-fated men were the first collectors of works of art, as distinct

from mere likenesses, in this country, and the first King of England to choose his Court Painter because he painted beautiful pictures was King Charles I.

Mytens' conscientious works were not to the taste of the beauty-loving King, and before long a painter, English born, though probably of Dutch descent and certainly trained in Holland, took his place. Cornelius Johnson was his name, and his work has all the Dutch precision in the painting of detail: but it has also a delicacy of modelling of features, and an exquisite sense of the colour-value of soft lights and shadows in the painting of costumes of sombre black, and collars of linen and lace; and so the pale faces glow with life, and the eyes shine with character in their quiet setting and in the silvery light that seems to fill the canvas.

But this quiet art, though it was English, and very beautiful, was not wholly satisfying to a King who had based his ideas of what painting should be upon the splendours of Titian and Rubens; and it is not surprising that when King Charles became acquainted with the work of van Dyck, the great pupil of Rubens, he lost no time in persuading him to come to England and be his Court Painter—"Serjeant-Painter to the King" as his title ran.

His work has already been discussed, in the history of Flemish painting; but there is a marked characteristic of the work of van Dyck which makes it necessary for us to return to it again. It is this: van Dyck in Flanders, van Dyck in Italy, and van Dyck in England, are scarcely the same painter at all. For each different public he has a different style. It is as though he breathed in the character of each people with the air in which they lived, and translated it into colour on his canvas. In Flanders his work was quiet, subdued and full of soft golden tone like the wonderful portrait of *Cornelius van der Geest* in the National Gallery, London; in Genoa he painted merchant princes and the proud bearers of ancient names, with splendour, glitter and ostentation; such pictures are that of the *Children of the Balbi Family*, resplendent in crimson

and gold, and the sumptuous glory of the full-length portrait of the *Marchesa Cattaneo*, standing on the steps of her palace and attended by a negro page who shelters her fair features from the glowing sunshine with a great umbrella of almost Oriental state. In England he painted pictures that were full of colour too, but it was soft and dignified, unboastful colour—the russet and gold and blue of **Philip Lord Wharton*, in the Hermitage Gallery, the almost forbiddingly cold blue and grey of the great portrait of **King Charles mounted upon a White Horse*, the silvery blue and pale smoky grey of his inimitable portrait of the *Countess of Southampton*, plump and pretty and complacent, enthroned in clouds—a delicious joke of a portrait by a courtly painter with his tongue in his cheek : and the wonderfully balanced scheme of the picture that he painted of himself with the Earl of Bristol his patron, in which pale and shimmering blue and gold, and the florid features of the Earl, balance black full of delicate lights, and the pale refinement of the artist himself.

The great gift that van Dyck made to England was that he discovered the Englishman's marvellously subtle colour-sense, and showed him how to make use of it. It was a pupil of his, William Dobson (1610-1646) who followed so closely in his footsteps that it is sometimes difficult at the first glance to tell their work apart. It is said that one day van Dyck saw in a shop window a portrait that seemed so good that he enquired who had painted it, and was told by the dealer that it was the work of a poor starving fellow who lived in a garret in Southwark, Dobson by name. He sought him out, took him into his own studio and taught him all his craft ; and when van Dyck died, there was no one in England better able to take his place as Serjeant-Painter to the King, than Dobson. His colouring and the design of his pictures are very like those of van Dyck, but his drawing is coarser, not so free and sure as that of the Flemish master ; yet in his landscape backgrounds there is, for all their roughness, a more spontaneous feeling, as though Dobson had really seen the skies and trees and fields that he has dashed in so broadly and with such

disregard for accuracy of detail. It is the colour and light in them that matter to him, not the actual forms themselves; and indeed it is likely that Dobson owed almost as much to his study of the work of Titian, before he met van Dyck, as he did to van Dyck himself: and though Charles I was rather wide of the mark when he called Dobson "the English Tintoretto," there is no doubt that he shared the Venetian love of light filled with a colour of its own, of which Tintoretto, even more than Titian, was so great a master.

Unfortunately, he died young: and three years after his death, native art in England suffered a terrible set-back, through the fall and execution of King Charles, and the ruthless dispersal of the Royal collection of pictures by the Commonwealth authorities. For the next eleven years pictures of pagan subjects were accounted blasphemous, religious pictures Popish, and human beauty wickedness. The only thing that enabled painting and painters to survive at all was human vanity. Even Ironsides could not resist the temptation of having their portraits painted; and perhaps it was just as well that Dobson died when he did, for it is very doubtful whether, with his love of colour, he could ever have painted portraits to please the Puritan in his sad-coloured garments, and with the grim, forbidding expression of his face.

Yet it was during this period that English painters made greater strides than ever before. They learned to find beauty in quiet and unobtrusive colour, and in the drawing of an ugly face, and realized for the first time that it was possible for a picture to be beautiful even though the subject were ugly. The teaching and example of van Dyck and Dobson had lasted just long enough to ensure that their work should be carried on, for portrait-painting went on without interruption; only the fashion of it changed.

We sometimes hear it claimed for Oliver Cromwell as evidence of his lack of personal vanity, that he insisted, when his portrait was painted, that he should be painted "wart and all." It is only evidence of the Englishman's love of a likeness; and since ugliness was in fashion, Cromwell's

vanity would not let him give up any of his fashionable ugliness; the painters of the Commonwealth had to find such beauty as they could in sober colour and simple design, and the portraits of this period make up for the fact that they purposely show people at their plainest, by the wonderful way in which the artists learn to find colour even in the dull browns and greys and blacks, in which their subjects are clothed.

The English painter who is most worthy of note during this time was Samuel Cooper (1609-1672), whose work as a miniature painter was remarkable for the freedom of its drawing, and the way in which he produced, on a small scale, the bold effect of a large picture; in these respects he marked a great advance upon the English miniaturists, Nicolas Hilliard (1547-1619), and Isaac Oliver (1565-1617), who had aimed at little more than a faithful likeness, and the most minute and delicate rendering of detail. It is almost impossible to guess, from a photograph of the work of Cooper, that it is not a much reduced copy of a life-sized portrait; and, in his original miniatures, one is struck more by the softness than by the richness of the colours, and by the way in which grey and black are made to play the part of colours, so skilfully are they relieved by the touches of rose colour and of blue, and by the warm and natural tone of the flesh.

He painted more than one portrait of Oliver Cromwell, and his drawing of the massive head, and lifelike rendering of character and expression, make us feel that at last here is an Englishman who is sure of himself, and who really understands the craft of drawing and painting; but his drawing of figures is disappointing, for the attitudes are wooden and the hands and arms are too small for the bodies as a rule; one can see that he was striving after the grace and elegance of van Dyck, but that he was not really interested enough in anatomy to give much attention to anything but colour and character.

It was in fact a Dutchman, who had come to London as a young man, immediately after the death of van Dyck, in 1640, who kept English portrait-painting up to the mark

till the Stuarts came back to the throne. This was Peter van der Faes, better known as Peter Lely, because he was born in a house that was known by the sign of the Lily, at Soest, in Westphalia; he had had some training as a painter at Haarlem, in Holland, and when he came to London, set to work to imitate the fashionable style of van Dyck in portraiture. He was a hard worker, and made money quickly, for, at the sales of the collections of King Charles I and the Duke of Buckingham, he was able to buy many pictures for his own collection, some of which he later gave to Charles II. During the Commonwealth he painted many notable Puritans, including **Cromwell* himself, and he too gained much valuable experience in soft and quiet colour from those uninspiring subjects. At the Restoration of Charles II in 1660, he was by far the best known painter in England, and, in spite of the fact that a crowd of foreign painters, mostly Dutch, came to England at that time, Lely was made Court Painter to the King. It is from this period of his work that he is best known to us, for he painted all the famous beauties of the Court, and all the principal men of his day, in all the splendour and variety of colour and magnificence which took the place of the grim sobriety of Cromwell's time.

Lely was a wonderful craftsman. In drawing he was precise yet bold, in colour, sumptuous yet well-balanced; in the rendering of character, fashionable, yet almost cruelly truthful. In the use of light and shade, and in the composition of pictures, he was both forcible and restrained. If he has been rather overlooked since the end of the 18th century, it is because the fashions of his day, the plump lazy beauty of the women, and the immense periwigs of the men, are so unlike later standards of beauty as to make it difficult for us to see past them and to grasp the beauty of the colour and design of which they form part.

At any rate English painting could scarcely have survived without him, for by his example he kept up the standard of the art, and forced Englishmen to try to draw well, and to learn the right way to put paint on to canvas. In the time of Charles II he had many English pupils and assistants,

and even the painters who were not directly taught by him modelled themselves upon his style. Of these, Greenhill and Riley are the most notable, and Mary Beale, who painted portraits of parsons. Greenhill was a genius, who, though he could never draw or handle paint like Lely, had a very delicate sense of colour, and remarkable skill, it is said, in catching a likeness; Riley was a slow and painful worker, uncertain in his drawing, except of heads, and his colour was inclined to be heavy and dull; Mary Beale was a respectable painter, but entirely without genius. It is quite plain that, without Lely to guide them, such people as these could never have carried English painting a single step forward.

Lely, then, was a Dutchman who came to England to make money as a painter. His native training had given him sound draughtsmanship and a sure colour-sense; to these he added a certain grace of composition, which he acquired by following the fashion of van Dyck, and a subtler sense of colour, by submitting to the sombre conditions of the Commonwealth; and thus by the time of the Restoration his art was so completely adapted to English needs that he was no longer a Dutch painter: but, in building up an art which was suitable to England, he had lost none of his soundness in painting and draughtsmanship, so that, for the first time in history, there existed a real art of painting which, though wholly foreign in ancestry, was recognizably English in style, and entirely different from contemporary Dutch and Flemish painting.

All his English pupils and imitators—and almost every painter in England, whether English or foreign, in the reign of Charles II, was either his pupil or his imitator—were his inferiors, for the simple reason that they merely copied his style, parrot-fashion, as it were, without any real understanding of the principles on which it was based. It is plain that if Lely had not been in England, the death of van Dyck, and of his brilliant pupil William Dobson, would have left us without anyone to set a standard of intelligent craftsmanship; and, even at the end of his long and industrious life, there was no English painter living,

capable of instructing the next generation of artists even in the most elementary principles of the craft. This country was, in fact, in the rather absurd position of possessing a national style of painting created by a foreigner, but not a single native painter who knew enough about it to keep it alive.

Fortunately, in 1674, six years before Sir Peter Lely's death, there arrived in England a very remarkable young man, one Godfrey Kneller (1646-1723), the youngest son of a German painter, Zacharias Kneller of Lübeck. He came fresh from two years in Italy, where he had studied in Rome and Naples under Maratti and Bernini, and had practised portrait-painting in Venice with considerable success : moreover, he had been trained as a painter, before that, at Amsterdam, under Bol, and, as some said, under Hals and Rembrandt as well ; and he added to all these advantages a fine opinion of himself, and a marvellous knack getting other people to share it. Probably he had no intention of staying in England long ; but some clever portraits by him came to the notice of the ill-fated Duke of Monmouth, who gave him a commission, and later, about 1678, introduced him to King Charles II, who allowed him to try his hand at a portrait at the same time that he gave a sitting to Sir Peter Lely. Kneller made the most of his opportunity, and while Sir Peter was laying in the monochrome underpainting of his portrait, in the sound tradition of his craft, Kneller finished *his* portrait of the King at one sitting, astonished the Court, and established a reputation.

It was a brilliantly clever stroke, but it was more than that. It showed that Kneller, in spite of his besetting sin of flashiness and slapdashery, knew his craft as a painter, and knew the structure of a human face and figure. He could paint the outside of a man swiftly because he knew what was underneath it.

This was exactly the leader whom English painters needed at that moment. Kneller had the wisdom not to compete with Lely while the old painter still lived in the full enjoyment of the patronage of the Court ; instead, he learned much from him, and corrected some of the false tricks of

drawing with which he had grown up ; but when Lely died, Kneller was already his acknowledged successor, and till he, in his turn, passed out, there was no other painter in England who counted.

From the last year of Charles II through the reigns of James II, William and Mary, and Anne, down to the ninth year of George I, he dominated English painting ; and, as greedy of money as he was of admiration, he undertook far more work than he could honestly perform, so that the majority of his portraits are scarcely more than soulless repetitions of one another, and, in many of them, scarcely more than the face is the work of his own hands, the dress, and, often enough, the periwig as well, being painted by assistants. He was no student of character ; or at least he gave himself no time for such studies, even if, as a German, he could have understood the English character of those whom he painted ; but just once in a while, on the rare occasions when he was interested enough to linger over a portrait, he shows how great a painter he might have been if he had not been so wrapped up in himself and in money-making. One such picture is his portrait of the *Marquis of Tweeddale*, in the National Gallery, London, a cruelly truthful portrait of a hard, bad man. In the handling of the paint it is something absolutely new to England, and indeed to the world, apart from the work of Velazquez, of which Kneller knew nothing, and which is not based on the same principle ; for instead of being slowly built up, sitting after sitting, it is painted all at once, as it were, with broad, sure strokes of thin colour, which overlap without obscuring one another, by a kind of brush-drawing in surfaces instead of lines ; it is a wonderful example of the daring that is possible to a man who is absolutely sure of his knowledge both of what he wants to draw and of how to draw it, and who is sufficiently interested to put that knowledge to the severest test. Another picture, not nearly so thoughtful, but far more instantaneous in its effect, as though Kneller had summed up his subject in a single glance, is that of the *Earl of Romney*, in the National Portrait Gallery, London. The pale face is

simplified almost to a mask in its setting of the huge periwig, and all the emphasis is upon the insolent eyes, the defiant line of the mouth, and the thin, hawk-like nose; and the broad shadow under the chin throws the head back into an imperious pose, which is at once dignified and a little aggressive. There is not a stroke of the brush wasted; the painting is as domineering, in its way, as the man it represented.

Kneller was not a genius; he was simply extremely clever in a very obvious way. At his worst he has style—that is, his portraits, even when they are dull and spiritless and superficial, are never laboured or clumsy; at his best, he is brilliant, and then as a pure craftsman, the absolute master of his tools, he cannot be surpassed: and the standard of mastery that he set to English painters for more than forty years drove them, whether they liked it or not, for the first time to face the drudgery of learning the history and the principles of good craftsmanship, not merely by copying the work of a single foreign painter who chanced to be in fashion in England, but by going back to the masters of Europe in the art of drawing, the Italians of the Renaissance.

The results were not encouraging at first, for though Jervas (1675–1739), Highmore (1692–1780), Kneller's pupils, Jonathan Richardson (1665–1745), the pupil of Riley, and Thomas Hudson (1701–1779), Richardson's son-in-law and pupil, could never have been mistaken either for Dutchmen or Germans, it was rather in their shortcomings that they showed themselves to be English, while such good qualities as they possessed were mostly derived from their study of the methods of Lely and Kneller. Their drawing is generally stiff and laboured, and, when they try to make it free and bold, though they may sometimes succeed in doing so, it is at the expense of accuracy. They have much the same simple skill in catching a likeness as their ancestors had had a hundred years before, and the new fashion of their time, of enlarging their pictures to include landscape backgrounds containing parks and country houses, and foregrounds full of dogs and game,

of showing their sitters engaged in various sports and occupations, or of grouping several persons together in what were called "conversation pieces" was merely an extension of the older idea of cramming into a 16th-century portrait as much detail of jewellery and fine clothes as possible. The artists of this period were concerned less with the beauty than with descriptive interest of their pictures, and all the lessons of van Dyck and Lely seemed to have been lost upon them.

During this period, however, there was growing up in England, very slowly, a queer kind of artificial taste for decorative painting on a large scale, which was very largely the result of the importation into England, by William III and George I, of such painters as the Italian Verrio, who, as a degenerate descendant of the great decorative painters of the later Renaissance, from Michelangelo and Correggio to Tiepolo, set a few English painters seeking for their subjects outside the range of portraiture, and showed even English people that the pleasure to be got from paintings was not entirely dependent upon their resemblance to some human individual, but might arise from their colour and design alone.

Sir James Thornhill was the first Englishman to practise this style of painting, and the great ceilings that he painted at Greenwich Hospital show that though his imagination was forced and dull, he had studied the drawing of the human figure from good Italian paintings as no Englishman before him had ever done, and he may be reckoned the first Englishman who ever gave serious thought and pains to draughtsmanship. If we contrast this with the way in which the Florentines, the Venetians, the Flemings and the Spaniards all went patiently through the mill of drawing from the first, it will be easier for us to understand why it was that the Englishman was so slow in developing a national style of painting; for he lacked any foundation upon which to build an art of his own, and needed to possess nothing short of sheer genius in the handling of colour and character, to make up for his ignorance of, and lack of interest in, craftsmanship.

Now the pity of it was that as soon as a small number of painters and lovers of painting in England became aware of the fact that design and drawing were beautiful things, they at once jumped to the conclusion that these were the only things that mattered, and that colour and character, and reality and life in the subjects painted, were common and "inartistic." From caring nothing about the style and everything about the subject, they went to the opposite extreme, and declared that no subject was fit to be painted that could not be treated in the "grand manner," as they called the classic Italian style of painting. The sad result of this was that the great majority of English people ceased to be interested in paintings at all; they went right back to the view that, in a portrait, only the likeness mattered, and looked upon all other kinds of painting as a sort of fad of a few rich and travelled people, and nothing to do with real life at all. It was this that started the idea which so many people have to-day, that art is a thing that only a few people can ever understand, and that all artists are peculiar people, generally slightly mad.

Fortunately there arose in England just when he was most needed, an English painter who proved that fine drawing, good painting-craft, and perfect composition are as valuable in portraiture, and in the representation of the scenes of ordinary life, as in the most classical of allegorical decorations, and that a most delicate and natural colour-sense is not a defect but a beauty. This was William Hogarth (1698-1764), and it is almost amusing that he should have been a pupil of the painstakingly "classical" Sir James Thornhill.

William Hogarth was a terrible trial to the critics of his day, for to him painting was not a thing apart from life, a kind of glorified end in itself, but simply a language, by means of which he could describe a character, or tell a story, or point a moral, or make an attack upon a political party or a social wrong. This was a use of painting which they could not understand, and they regarded it as degrading to the art, vulgar and unseemly; so they alternately abused and laughed at the painter, and refused to take him seriously as an artist, although both as a draughtsman and a colourist

he was without a real rival until Joshua Reynolds was well advanced upon his career, and his portraits had a vigorous reality that was never surpassed by any painter of his century. The trouble was that they had not "the grand manner," and it is true that Hogarth could not be "grand." He tried, once, in 1759, as a direct challenge to his critics, and failed badly. The picture, *Sigismonda*, is in the National Gallery, London (N.G. 1646). It is meant to be tragic, and is merely theatrical and dull.

But when he painted the tragedy of real life, the silly, sordid tragedy of greed and idleness and folly, as he painted it in the series of six little pictures called the *Marriage à la Mode* (N.G. 113-118), each one of those pictures is a chapter in a human story, told with sureness and precision, with crisp brilliance and telling detail, as a novelist who was both a master of style and a keen student of human nature might have told it. We may read each one of these pictures as though it were a book, and yet never lose sight of the compactness, and the balance, of each picture as a self-contained whole. The style is there, but it is not pompous and self-assertive; it is simply a means of telling the story as well as it can be told.

Yet, though he is so English, and so little concerned with "art" except as a means to an end, Hogarth was rather the last of the English painters in the old tradition of Lely and van Dyck than the first of the new school of which Reynolds was to be the greatest figure. His small figures are Italian in the delicacy of their drawing and remind us of the work of the latest of the Venetians, men like Pietro Longhi and Zais: but his painting method is that of Lely in his draperies, and his colour has the freshness and simplicity of real life seen at first hand, not the formal splendour of an art built up in the studio from the example of the great Italian decorative painters; and he had no followers, either in his methods of painting, which were swept out of fashion by the sudden rush of enthusiasm for Italian models, or in his choice of subjects, which were ill-suited to the complacent magnificence of society under the last two Georges, after the political



HOGARTH
The Countess's Dressing Room
(*English*)

strain of Jacobite and anti-Jacobite hatreds had passed away.

Still, in spite of the critics, he had done a great work, for he had shown that a portrait could be vividly living, and yet beautiful in colour and design and severely accurate in drawing, and that an interesting subject could be painted well without becoming dull. But for his work, we might never have had the roguishness of Sir Joshua Reynolds' *Nelly O'Brien*, or the tantalizing charm of his *Mrs. Abington*, or the sturdy bluffness of his wonderful *Admiral Keppel*, in the National Gallery, London (N.G. 886); for these, for all the grandeur of their colour and design, are not in the least "grand," but just intensely human: and, since Hogarth taught English people to demand liveliness as well as beauty in painting, the greatest of his successors learned to satisfy that demand, and to make their work English as well as beautiful.

It must not be thought that Hogarth was opposed to the study by Englishmen of the great painters of Italy. Indeed, he was among the first of Englishmen to realize the sore need of English painters, for instruction in draughtsmanship and in the craft of painting; and besides carrying on a School of Art, in St. Martin's Lane, he worked long and earnestly for the foundation of an Academy of Art under Royal, or at least, official patronage; and it was largely due to his efforts that, although he did not live to see it, the Royal Academy was eventually founded in 1768. He himself had never visited Italy, and his unpopularity among the critics, together with his lack of the fashionable "grandeur," and the enmity he had incurred by his political satires, caused him to be regarded as a "crank." It is even likely that as long as he lived the foundation of the Academy would have been deliberately delayed. It is rather sad that the very first English painter to be brilliant in practice, profound in theory, and original in expression, should have reaped so little honour from his own generation, though that generation was the first in England to talk about art at all, or indeed to realize, even vaguely, that such a thing as art could be produced in England by Englishmen

for English patrons. A contemporary of Hogarth, who had far more to do than he, directly, with forming the new generation of English painters, was Thomas Hudson, (1701-1779), a dull and painstaking fellow with a natural gift for catching a likeness, but so little power of drawing that he had to leave the painting of the bodies and draperies of his portraits to his assistants, who were mostly Dutchmen. His likeness-taking capabilities made him the most in demand of the portrait-painters of his time, despite the fact that there was generally an odd lack of connection between the heads and bodies of his portraits; and this demand for his work also brought him into request as a teacher, so that he numbered among his apprentices many painters who later became famous. He seems to have been a better teacher than painter, and it is known that his recognition of his own feebleness as a draughtsman made him insist strongly on good drawing by his pupils. His own style of painting was derived from that of Kneller, and he had nothing of the Italian freedom and breadth of drawing and dignity of composition, but he impressed the value of these, too, upon his pupils; and he had not enough individuality of his own to hamper the development of genius when it came under his tuition.

The earlier of his two greatest pupils was Richard Wilson, to whom we shall return. Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792) was ten years younger than Wilson, but we shall consider his work first, for it was he who created a new era in the history of art in this country. Born a year before the death of Sir Godfrey Kneller, he grew up at a time when the style of that artist was still regarded as the standard from which there was no appeal. He was the son of a scholar of Balliol College, Oxford, headmaster of the grammar school at Plympton Earl, near Plymouth, and from his schooldays was given to drawing, much to his father's disgust.

"This," wrote his indignant (but possibly secretly gratified) parent, on the back of a sketch made by the boy at the age of twelve, "was drawn by Joshua in school hours, out of pure idleness." But the talent of young Reynolds was so marked that eventually his father apprenticed him

for two years to Thomas Hudson. At the end of his apprenticeship, Reynolds returned home to practice as a portrait-painter, but his friend Admiral Keppel carried him off to Italy for a holiday cruise, and he remained there for two years, studying Italian art, and especially that of Michelangelo.

It was evidence of his genius that this did not result in his imitating Italian subjects or Italian styles of painting, but in his use of the knowledge of draughtsmanship and composition that he had acquired, to paint better portraits. His portrait of *Admiral Keppel*, standing upon the beach, in the act of leading on his men to the attack on the crew of a grounded French ship, was the firstfruit of his Italian studies : and thus he was the first English painter to paint a portrait, not only of a man, but of his "energies and aptitudes" as Sir Walter Armstrong has expressed it. He had caught, in fact, not only the craft of the Italians, but their liveliness, their enjoyment and reality.

This, indeed, sums up the greater part of his life-work. To him portrait-painting was quite as much a matter of character as of feature. Not only was he the first English portrait-painter to bring to his task a first-hand knowledge and understanding of the craft of the greatest of the Italians, but he was the first Englishman of genius equipped to paint portraits of English men and women. Kneller, a German, had been familiar with his craft but not with his subjects ; Hogarth lacked the instinctive dignity which enabled Reynolds to translate Michelangelo and Correggio, as it were, into English, and he lacked also the first-hand acquaintance with the source of all grandeur of design ; Reynolds understood both his craft and his subjects, and was strong enough to bend even the great classic principles of design to the needs of English portrait-painting. His strength lay in his modesty. He was a portrait-painter, and he felt it his duty to put all his knowledge and skill at the service of each man and woman that came to him for a portrait. A graceful woman, a dignified statesman, a loving mother and a bashful child, a coquettish actress, a stern soldier, each suggested to him a different

theme of composition, a different scheme of colour, a different spirit, as it were; and for each one he drew upon the whole store of his knowledge and experience, and added bold and adventurous—and sometimes disastrous—experiment to these, to keep pace with the infinite variety of human character that he felt in each new subject. His great contemporary and rival, the untaught genius Gainsborough, complained of him “The fellow is so d——d various!” He was various, because he was a student both of people and of painting, to his life’s end.

He was a bachelor all his life, deaf, and rather shy of women; but he loved children, and they loved him; and his painting of them shows both sympathy and originality; for even when he painted a ceremonial portrait like that of little **Viscount Althorp*, with all the dignity of a grown man in his pose, as he stands in the big open landscape, dressed in nankeens, with a blue sash and a great black hat, he manages to preserve a child-like air of solemn make-believe: the picture probably pleased the little boy himself as much as anyone; and on the other hand, there is no make-believe about the famous **Age of Innocence*, in the National Gallery, London (N.G. 307). The little girl is utterly without self-consciousness, artless, as the composition is simple and straightforward, the colour glowing and yet quiet, the attitude full of life and yet completely reposeful.

The drawing of Sir Joshua Reynolds is so sure that one never has to think about it at all. His composition is so balanced, so easy, so invariably appropriate to its subject that it seems part of the subject itself. The portrait of *Lord Heathfield*, the defender of Gibraltar (N.G. 111), is a splendid example of this, for every line in the drawing of the scarlet coat, and even of the cannon of the rock-batteries on either side in the background, leads up to the finely poised head, with its heavy but expressive features and florid colour, so that the figure has an immovable strength—like that of the rock of Gibraltar itself; and Reynolds’ superb colour-sense is shown in this picture too, by the skill with which he has used exactly the right blue-grey tint in the great cloud of smoke which drifts behind the figure,



REYNOLDS
Viscount Althorp
(English)

to balance and subdue the harshness of the scarlet uniform, and to give the first importance to the face—one of the most difficult problems that a painter can have to solve.

Reynolds mistrusted genius, and believed in constant study and hard work, and for this reason he strove hard to give to those painters of the rising generation, who could not study, as he had done, in Italy, wider opportunity of learning the lessons of the great Italian masters. To this end he brought about the foundation in 1768 of the Royal Academy Schools, and the formation of the body of Royal Academicians, for the primary purpose of giving instruction to students in the School, with the aid of studies from the living model, and from antique sculpture. He was, rightly, the first President of the Royal Academy, and his lectures or “discourses” to its pupils are still models of sound advice to students, constantly urging upon them the necessity of hard work, and thoughtful use of the knowledge and skill acquired by it. English art owes a tremendous debt to him, not only for his own achievements, but also for the impulse that he gave to the study of the craft of painting.

Strangely enough, though he was the apostle of “academic” painting, that is, of the foundation of the art of to-day upon the study of the history of art, his own methods of painting were so new as to be almost revolutionary. Though he still adhered to the method of monochrome underpainting, his paint in his later work is laid on in rich, heavy masses, and the final lights and deepest shadows are put in with a vigour which almost amounts to violence: there is none of that obvious consciousness of construction which made the brilliance of Kneller, but nevertheless the solidity of his figures is one of his most marked characteristics, by reason of his masterly handling of masses of light and shade. His colour is rich and full, growing steadily warmer and bolder as he grows more mature; but many of his pictures have deteriorated sadly, owing to his careless and adventurous use of new pigments, of whose chemical properties he knew nothing.

In this he was scarcely to blame, for his colour-sense was far too delicate and sensitive to be satisfied by the comparatively narrow range of the colours which had satisfied the needs of his foreign predecessors. His was a colour-sense that was new in the history of art, the English colour-sense that was yet to produce Turner and Constable and Crome, and the great school—which he did not foresee—of English landscape painters.

The last three years of his life he spent in darkness and in silence, deaf and blind, but loving his art to the end: and the last word that he spoke in his last discourse as President of the Royal Academy, was the name of the great Florentine, Michelangelo, from whom he had learnt so much, and whom he held up as an ideal to those who were to follow him.

Thomas Gainsborough (1727-1788), the only peer of Sir Joshua Reynolds, stands out as a monument of English obstinacy and impatience of discipline. It is a strange thing that two men so totally unlike one another both in temperament and in their point of view with regard to art, should share both in their own time and in ours, the highest honours of the 18th century: for while Reynolds set great store by the example of the Italian painters, and both preached and practised hard work as the only road to success, Gainsborough never learned to draw a human figure correctly, and his greatness is due far more to inspiration than to industry. Reynolds was a grave, respectable, and courtly person, a member of society as well as a painter of it; Gainsborough, gay and despondent by turns, was impatient of society and its formalities, and found a refuge from the insincerity of portrait-painting in the almost unexplored beauty of the English countryside. Reynolds was a student of character, had a true genius in catching a likeness, and was so completely master of his art that he could and did choose his whole colour-scheme and composition to suit the character of each separate sitter, while Gainsborough, caring little for character, sometimes failed totally to get a likeness, but almost always succeeded (unless his sitter bored him very badly) in finding some

new beauty of light and delicate colour in his subject ; and, when it chanced that the sitter really interested him, he made a portrait so sympathetic, so brilliant in execution, with so fairy-like a lightness of touch in the feathery strokes of the brush, as to seem, to-day, to possess a kind of ethereal immortality of its own, that makes us forget the mortality of the woman who inspired it. When we see the portrait that Reynolds painted of the actress " Perdita " Robinson, in the Wallace Collection, we may marvel at the dignity with which he has invested the irregular profile, and at the delicate and tantalizing mystery that he has thrown about her, by his scheme of tender, quiet greys : we may ask who she was, and what her life was, whether she lived to grow old ; for it is a wonderful portrait. But Gainsborough's portrait of the same woman, in the same collection, is mystery itself, a vision of a mocking fairy in a woodland, gazing with bold yet secret eyes—a fantasy of sunlight through the trees—and we know that *his* Perdita never could grow old, for he created her upon his canvas, and she is still young before our eyes, whatever may have happened to the mortal woman who sat before him while he created this expression of his joy in seeing her.

Gainsborough owed nothing to scholarship or knowledge of the history of his art, and little enough to the tradition of his time. His was the pure inspiration that made his craft for him as he went along, to suit his need ; when inspiration flowed freely, he succeeded miraculously ; when inspiration dried up, he failed miserably. When he painted a portrait, it was as more a portrait of his own mood than of his sitter's features. His portrait of **Mrs. Siddons* (N.G. 683) has the cold, hard brilliance of a sneering epigram ; that of his daughter (N.G. 1482) has the quiet tenderness of protective love and the simple boldness of a perfect understanding ; the glorious **Mrs. Graham*, in the National Gallery of Scotland, is full of passionate sympathy ; and deadly boredom speaks plainly from all the careful cleverness of his painting of the *Baillie Family* (N.G. 789) ; only in the figure of the second Miss Baillie, the liveliness and lightness of his touch tell us that in the roguish little

girl the boyish gaiety of the painter had found a kindred spirit.

I wish I could write more simply of him ; but this wayward, untaught genius of his was the first of its kind in the history of English painting, and very few have caught a breath of it since. What Gainsborough did for English painting was to show that its truly English history was scarcely yet begun, and that while an Englishman might learn, by study of the classic Italians, how to paint and how to draw, nothing but his own instinct could teach him what to paint or how to see. The painting of Italy had grown out of a public need for pictures in places where all men shared them in common ; English pictures from the first had been the private possessions of those who had them painted. Thus, while the classic painter addressed himself to all in general, and to no one person in particular, and so could not lay too much stress upon his individual mood or point of view, the English painter, to be truly English, must paint rather for the few than for the many, and could be as individual as he pleased, because his patron chose him as being the painter whose individuality he liked best, as a man chooses a friend. It is just the difference between a public speech and a private conversation. A great orator is one who sways a multitude by his choice of words and by the balance of his sentences ; he must possess the art of speech, the polish of phrase, the exactitude of grammar that are like the classic purity of line and balance of composition of a great decorative painting ; and his theme must be of some great cause or principle, not of his own fancies or affairs. A man who talks among his friends has no need for such finished art, nor of grandeur either of subject or of phrase ; but he must have quick wit, a more intimate persuasiveness, a more rapid change of humour, a keener sympathy, a wider range of understanding, and above all, he must be himself, and the thoughts that he expresses must be his very own ; and no amount of study of the style of great orators will give him either thoughts of his own or the power to express them.

Perhaps it was because he felt this that Gainsborough was at first a landscape painter, and a portrait-painter only by necessity; for portrait-painting demanded of him a grandeur that he did not often feel. The great stately homes of the 18th-century England were almost too stately to be homes—rather they were palaces—and portraits painted for them must be stately too, stately as the ceremonious conversation that went on below them in the great halls where they were hung. Such portraits might well be painted by men who were steeped in the lessons of Italian art, for they were not intimate, but semi-public in character, oratorical rather than conversational. Nature, on the other hand, answered every human mood, and there was no stately classical tradition to hinder the Englishman from painting her just as he saw her with his own eyes and in his own mood, for no one before had ever painted England. Besides, nature does not complain if the painter does not flatter her, as human subjects very often do; and in an English landscape there is far more variety of light and colour than any human being can provide.

Gainsborough was the first English painter, I think, to realize that English landscape cannot be painted according to the rules of French or Italian, Dutch or Flemish painters: and though in his earliest days he carefully composed his landscapes in the manner of Dutchmen such as Wyck and Wynants, these influences hampered more than they helped him, and he was only a schoolboy when he began his *Wood Scene, Cornard, Suffolk* (N.G. 925), which he did not finish till he was twenty-one. In this picture he was the first to take the country as he found it, the first to paint the bright glare of oak trees in strong sunshine against a thundery sky, and to lead our eyes along a winding track to the blue distance and the white church tower that lies beyond the wood: and though, at the time, he spoke of the work as lacking in composition, to the end of his life he looked back upon this youthful achievement with secret pride and satisfaction.

Removal to Bath, with its fashionable life and pressure of growing portrait practice, took him away from this direct

touch with Nature; and London brought to bear new influences, notably that of the work of van Dyck, which would have driven landscape painting out of the thoughts of a less sincere lover of Nature. Yet all his life he remained at heart a landscape painter, and the "new transparent painting," the light expressive touch, which marks his latest and greatest period, is as exquisitely adapted to the luminous and romantic landscapes of this time, as to the portrait painting in which it was originated; and with it, a use of colour so subtle as to sink almost into monochrome, enabled him, with a single strong note (such as the red shawl hanging behind the waggon in the glorious *Harvest Waggon* that he gave to his carrier, John Wiltshire), to make every subdued tint in the whole picture take its place in the atmospheric scheme. Thus he evolved a composition of his own, owing nothing to tradition, but born of his own inspired love of his native landscape, and guided by the intent to make unmistakably plain what thing it was in Nature that answered to his mood and gave him joy.

Richard Wilson was born on the day that Queen Anne, the last of the Stuart monarchs, died—August 1st, 1714. The coincidence is worth remembering, for Wilson, even more than Gainsborough, departed from the outlook of the 17th century, though he had not the genius of Gainsborough to discover new means of expressing his new point of view, and long residence in Italy confirmed him in an Italian rather than an English method of painting English beauty. He began life as a portrait-painter, and when he first came to London from his native Wales at the age of fifteen, he came into touch with Jonathan Richardson, the father-in-law of Thomas Hudson, and himself a portrait-painter who had learned his craft from John Riley, who has already been mentioned as a follower though not a pupil of Sir Peter Lely. Richardson was the best known portrait painter of his day (for Hogarth was not approved by the critics, though it was in this year, 1729, that he had painted his wonderful portrait of *Lavinia Fenton as Polly Peachum* in the "Beggar's Opera"), and Wilson studied with Hudson, probably at the recommendation of

Richardson. Thus he was fully under the influence of the tradition of Lely, and probably learned more from Richardson than from Hudson, who was only thirteen years older than himself: yet from the first, he painted more freely, and with richer and softer colour than his teachers; and already, before he went to Italy in 1749, he had made many landscape drawings, and at least two simple, natural landscape paintings, the views of *St. George's Hospital* and of the *Foundling Hospital* which he gave to the Foundling Hospital in 1746.

Nevertheless it was in Italy that he first took seriously to landscape painting and became familiar with the methods of Zuccarelli in Venice and of the great French landscape painter Claude Vernet in Rome, where he also studied the work of Claude le Lorrain; and his Italian landscapes are strongly influenced by these Italian and French associations, and by the "classical" fashion of the time. It was not until his return to England in 1756 that he began to paint landscape, as it were at first hand, and by that time his method of painting was firmly set, and combined the solidity of Dutch craftsmanship with the serenely but rather formally balanced design of the Franco-Italian School of landscape painters; even his sense of colour had become a little formal, and seldom strayed far from a narrow range of silver or golden tone, and of quiet and harmonious, but not very realistic, browns and golds, greens and blues. So, he fell between two stools; for his love of English landscape was real, as his **River Landscape*, and the **View on the Wye*, both formerly at Dorchester House, amply prove; and therefore he did not please the worshippers of "classic" subjects; but on the other hand, the dignity and restraint of the design of these pictures, and their rather formal composition, and, above all, the gentle glowing light with which they seem to be filled, puzzled the good folk who, in the latter half of the 18th century, were all agog for "portraits of places" in which they could recognize every hedge of the fields, and every window of the houses, in places they knew, or who were ready enough to enjoy the story-telling picture, full of sentiment,

of the new school of "picturesque" and "romantic" painters. Wilson, though he was one of the first members of the Royal Academy at its foundation in 1768, was not sought after either by his fellow-artists or by the public, and he died, poor and almost forgotten, in 1782.

We can see now, after nearly 150 years, that, for all their stately design and glowing golden colour, his earlier Italian landscapes are only the apprenticeship of his art. His true greatness was in finding the grandeur in simple English scenes and the infinite play of light and shadow in the mountains of Wales. Let us put it this way: Gainsborough was the happy, talkative, sentimental companion of Nature; Wilson was her reverent worshipper. Gainsborough painted his own moods, and made it seem that they were the moods of Nature; but Wilson painted her quietude and immortality, and found in them his own.

He was impatient of criticism, sensitive to injustice and neglect, and rough in manner, no courtier in an age when courtliness was the surest road to patronage, and so he was passed over while lesser men made friends and fortunes; but the landscape painters that were to follow him, Crome and Turner and Constable, are all deeply in his debt for power to see, besides the charm of English landscape, its dignity, besides its romance, its repose. His work was the foundation-stone of English landscape, for the influence of the great Dutchmen, Ruisdael and Hobbema, was yet to come, though their work had already long been known in England in Wilson's own day.

But now we must return for a while to the artists who shared the honours of the greatest period of English portrait-painting. Of these one, George Romney (1734-1802), was never a member of the Royal Academy, and the other, John Hoppner (1758?-1810), was a German. Romney, indeed, was Sir Joshua Reynolds' pet aversion—he used to speak of him as "the man in Cavendish Square"—and though he was one of the most successful painters of his time, he was totally lacking in precisely those qualities which we most admire in the work of Sir Joshua Reynolds. His drawing is often downright bad: his pictures convey

no impression of solid form, of light and shade, and of space and atmosphere ; his power of getting a likeness or of rendering the character of his sitter was small, for he displayed but little interest in most of his subjects, often painting them without even speaking a word to them, and sometimes not even knowing their names ; and so he could not build a scheme of colour and design upon his feeling about them, because he had none. On the other hand, he succeeded just where Reynolds failed. He understood his colours perfectly and mixed them carefully, so that, while Reynolds' pictures are too often cracked and faded, Romney's are as fresh and gay as the day that they were painted. He had the power to see at a glance the decorative possibilities of his subject, even when it consisted (as in *The Beaumont Family*, N.G. 3400) of a large number of life-sized figures ; and his sense of design and arrangement was perfect. The absence of atmosphere and depth was essential to his point of view, for his whole art depends upon the pleasant effect of flat, simple, delicate colour—upon charm rather than strength. A portrait by Reynolds dominates a room ; a portrait by Romney decorates it. Romney's pictures, in fact, are easy to live with ; those of Reynolds have to be lived up to. His was the first move in the direction of making pictures that suited the needs of people living in houses of ordinary size, without oppressive grandeur and yet in decent dignity ; and so, in his own day, he had a great popularity, and was kept hard at work upon portraits when he longed to paint great historical pictures, in which his decorative instinct would have had full play.

Even when he was interested in a sitter, it is the decorative aspect that is uppermost in his work. The story of his admiration for Lady Hamilton is told by the immense number of pictures—nearly one hundred—that he painted of her ; yet even in these the portrait is a secondary consideration ; colour and design come always first.

Romney met Emma Hart, afterwards the wife of Sir William Hamilton, in 1782, and it is not too much to say, that the impression she made upon him changed his whole art, for it gave him what he had never possessed before,

enthusiasm. We have only to look at his picture of **Lady Hamilton with a Goat*, at Cranbury Park, and to compare it with the *Lady and Child* (N.G. 1667) painted in 1782, before the influence had had time to work, to realize the change.

In all his pictures of Lady Hamilton, his hand moves more freely, the lines of his design are bolder, colour is richer, though no less pure, than in his earlier work. There is no trace of the stiffness, the over-carefulness which mars some of his best portraits before 1782. Even his visit to Italy, in 1773, for which he had saved laboriously, and on which he spent all his savings, did not free him wholly from that stiffness, though he learned much from the study, especially, of Correggio, and was deeply impressed by the need for draughtsmanship in his own work. It was not until he found a subject whom he could paint with sympathy and enjoyment, that he could forget to be cautious, and run the risk of bad drawing for the sake of expressing himself freely and swiftly.

His *Mrs. Robert Trotter of Bush* (N.G. 2943), painted in 1788-1789, is a good example of what I mean. It is a fresh, dainty, winsome picture of a pretty woman in a big straw hat with blue ribbons, and it is shockingly drawn: the foreshortening of the face is all wrong. It does not matter. It is so absolutely spontaneous, natural, and happy in the way it is painted, in big bold spaces of clean colour, so entirely without any suggestion of labour or attentive thought, that we are carried away by it as we might be by the song of a bird. To find fault with its drawing would be like scolding a thrush for singing a tune that could not be set down in the notes of a piano.

So, gradually, English painters built up during the 18th century a school of painting that was quite their own. They owed much to the sound painting methods inherited from Dutch and Flemish painters, and much to the study of Italian drawing and design; but each used them in his own way; even Sir Joshua Reynolds, the most scientifically "Italian" of them all in theory, was in practice absolutely English, and depended for his greatness more upon his

sensitiveness to colour and character than upon his knowledge of drawing and his admiration of Italian grandeur : and so firmly was this English School established by the latter half of the 18th century, that the foreigners who came to England no longer came to teach, but to learn, so that they too must be reckoned as members of the "English School." Such painters as Zoffany, a German, Angelica Kauffman, a Swiss, and Hoppner, a German, would be picked out in any foreign gallery as English painters. John Hoppner (1758-1810) especially (and perhaps naturally, seeing that, though of German parents, he was born in Whitechapel), is as English in his style as Gainsborough or Reynolds. He learned his art in the Royal Academy Schools, and at first followed closely the style of Sir Joshua Reynolds, but as time went on his composition became simpler and less dramatic, and his colour was always quieter and cooler than that of Reynolds. His portraits have a certain simplicity and charm, and he was specially successful in painting children. His landscape backgrounds, though pleasant as backgrounds, have very little real feeling for landscape in them, and in this he was like Reynolds, who had not the faintest idea of how to paint a landscape otherwise than as a background for a portrait. Hoppner's portraits of the **Countess of Oxford* (N.G. 900) and his lovely picture of the **Misses Frankland* (which is not unlike Gainsborough's *Misses Linley* in general arrangement) show this very plainly, for in the former, the landscape is scarcely more than suggested in faint grey tones, and in the latter it is a purely formal arrangement of red-browns and blue-greys designed to fit the figures, and to distribute light and dark in the unoccupied part of the canvas. Both these portraits also show the quiet, without dullness, of Hoppner's way of representing his subjects. They seem conscious that they are having their portraits painted, it is true, but their thoughts are pleasantly engaged with something else ; they are neither bored by being painted, nor painfully and self-consciously posing for the artist. The people whom Hoppner painted seem to have been at their ease with him

and with themselves ; and so Hoppner carried a stage further than Romney had done, the thoroughly English movement of art towards "companionable" pictures—pictures for the ordinary home.

A great change, however, was coming over the history of English painting at this time. In the beginning of the 18th century, anyone who wished to be a painter had to serve his apprenticeship for several years with a master, and by the time he was free to paint on his own account, was already well set in his master's style of painting, so that tradition was strong and progress gradual and easily traced. The Academy Schools changed all that. Any promising student could attend the schools, and learn drawing from one master, painting from another, and anatomy from yet another ; and in a comparatively short time he arrived at being able to practise as a painter, without having been greatly influenced by the style of any one of his masters. Thus, from the last years of the 18th century onwards, we can no longer speak of one artist as the pupil of another, and there are almost as many styles as there are painters, though of course a successful and fashionable painter found many imitators, mostly among inferior artists.

The work of Sir Thomas Lawrence (1769–1830), though he was guided and helped by Sir Joshua Reynolds, is like nothing that came before it. It is just a reflection of Lawrence's own showy and rather superficial character. In colour, it is rich and strong ; in drawing, it is bold, but full of clever mannerisms—he invented a way of drawing a woman's slender throat which is exquisitely graceful, but entirely conventional, and every woman whose portrait he painted is given this "Lawrence line"—his grouping is delightfully easy and full of movement, and there is wonderful vitality, a kind of perpetual eagerness in the expression of the faces of his women, as, in his men, there is a kind of pleased consciousness of being better-looking—more "correct"—than they ever were before. Moreover, there is in almost all of them a haunting likeness to Lawrence himself, as though he felt that he could do no better for

them than to make them as good-looking as he knew himself to be. Lawrence was a great painter by sheer brilliance, which amounted to genius, but there was no depth in the man or in his work, and his cleverness sometimes almost descends to vulgarity ; for this reason it is generally in his earlier and less self-confident works, in which he was still feeling the restraining influence of Sir Joshua Reynolds, that we see him at his best, as in the lovely portrait of the **Countess Bathurst Sewing*, which is in Lord Bathurst's, collection ; here, the only use of the strong red that he loved is in the curtain behind the head with its powdered hair, and this brings out beautifully the contrast between the warm flesh-tone and the cool shadows of the white dress. But even in so delicate a picture as this, the blues and greens of the distant landscape are a little showy and lacking in repose. Lawrence was rather like an impatient, self-important child that cannot wait to speak when it is spoken to, but must let people know that it is there. No better example of this fact can be found than the famous *Pinkie*, with its gaudy blue sky, and slender white figure with wide space all around it. It is a lively, showy picture ; but it is not dignified as Reynolds was dignified, nor decorative as Romney was decorative, nor charming as Gainsborough was charming, nor companionable as Hoppner was companionable. It is self-assertive, as Lawrence was self-assertive, that is all. We can forgive its self-assertion, because it is pretty ; but there are times when we could gladly do without it.

As Lawrence truly said when he heard of the death of Hoppner, he was then left without a rival, in England at any rate. As a painter both of men and women, it was he whom all other painters sought to imitate, and no imitator could ever touch Lawrence, because to be an imitator one must lack self-confidence, and Lawrence was all self-confidence ; it is the very soul of all his work. Even the unfinished picture of **William Wilberforce*, in the National Portrait Gallery, London, has gone far enough to show how quickly he got life and vigour into his work, and how soon he knew whether it was going right ; and the bold drawing

of the unfinished portion shows that he could see ahead and work out the whole of his picture before his mind's eye, so that the mere painting of it was done with effortless ease. That is not the kind of thing that anyone can imitate.

Far away in Edinburgh, however, he had a contemporary, who never competed with him in the London world, but who was a greater painter by far than he. That Lawrence had some suspicion of this may be shown by the fact that, when Raeburn visited London in 1810 with some idea of settling there, Lawrence went to some trouble to point out to him how many were the advantages of his undisputed supremacy in Scotland.

Henry Raeburn (1756-1823) began life as an apprentice to a jeweller, and painted miniatures as part of that business; but the excellence of his work attracted the attention of David Martin, a portrait-painter and a pupil of Sir Allan Ramsay, who was the principal Scottish painter of the day; and he became Martin's apprentice, receiving also some instruction from Ramsay himself. Scottish painting had at least as good a tradition as English painting, and was derived from much the same sources, as is shown by the fact that in Charles the First's time, John Jamesone was known as "the Scottish van Dyck"; and as early as the 16th century, Scottish painters went to Flanders to learn their art. Ramsay had learnt the elements of painting in London from a Dutchman and had also studied in Italy, and his work is scholarly, firm in drawing, and strong yet delicate in colouring. Therefore Raeburn, in Edinburgh, was very nearly as well off for instruction as he would have been in London, and by the time he was twenty-one, had already developed a style of his own, more "modern," as we should say, than anything that London could show. Society in Edinburgh was highly cultured, and taste was critical, and there is nothing "provincial" about the work of Raeburn from the first. The people whom he had to paint were solid, well-established people, of dignity and refinement, and solidity, dignity and refinement are the outstanding characteristics of his portraits. His colour is always restrained, often rich and bold, but never hot or aggressive.

All his portraits are tremendously alive, but never with the restless liveliness of Lawrence ; they are sure of themselves, and so are never aggressive. I can describe this quality no better than by saying that however warm the tone of Raeburn's pictures may be, the people in them always look cool. For example, the *Mrs. Lauzun*, in the National Gallery, London (N.G. 1837), is a silvery grey picture, while the **Mrs. Scott Moncrieff*, in the National Gallery of Scotland, has a dark background behind the red cloak and warm complexion of the lady ; yet, if these two pictures were set side by side, the contrast in colour-note would not strike us so much as the cool serenity of both the subjects.

Raeburn was singularly skilful and happy in the way he painted soft light and shadow, especially in white and yellow tones, and his great gift for making the whole of his picture lead up to the eyes of his subject is well seen in his **Boy with Rabbit*, the picture which he presented to the Diploma Gallery of the Royal Academy in London when he received the honour of Membership, although he had never practised as a painter in London at all. His composition was always very simple, without any attempt at the display of originality, though he could be dramatic when he liked, as when he painted the wonderful portrait of *The McNab*, a tall old man in full Highland costume, standing erect against a stormy sky, or easily familiar, as in his delightful picture of *Colonel McMurdo* (N.G. 1435) seated beside a stream with a fishing-rod, and smiling conversationally out of the canvas in the most natural fashion in the world.

With the exception of three visits to London, the first in 1785 on his way to Italy, when he met Sir Joshua Reynolds and followed his advice by studying in Italy the work of Michelangelo, and the second in 1810 when he met Sir Thomas Lawrence, and the third in 1815, he scarcely ever left Edinburgh, where he painted industriously in regular business hours, and lived the ordinary life of a Scottish gentleman of means when his day's work was over. There was never a more serenely successful painter, and never one less spoiled by success ; and so quickly did his mastery of his art develop, and so completely was his

style, with its free, liquid brushwork and its firm, straightforward drawing, his own from the first, that it is very difficult indeed to place his paintings in the order of their date. He left no successor in Edinburgh, and because the people for whom he painted were just prosperous private citizens, his pictures were, so to speak, lost to sight in private houses for half a century, and have only comparatively lately begun to have their influence upon British art as a whole ; but since they have become known again, that influence has been so strong that he has come to be reckoned as the most advanced, the most modern painter of his time.

To sum up, the art of painting in England progressed, in the century from, roughly, 1730 to 1830, from a careful and laborious imitation of Flemish, Dutch, and German methods of making likenesses, to a really native art, in which each painter worked out his own way of painting, and painted as pleased him best, as the result of independent study of the great painters of the past, both Northern and Italian.

The first result of this change is the widening of the field of painting. Seeking for beauty at first hand, English artists began to find it where their Continental forerunners had not found it, and English landscape painting came into existence.

It is strange that, in the development of so peaceful an art as that of landscape painting, war should have played an important part, but it is so. The art of Crome, Constable, Turner, Girtin and Cotman was built up at a time when England was almost entirely cut off from intellectual and artistic intercourse with Europe by the wars with France ; and to understand how startling was the impression produced in France at the end of this period of isolation, by the works of Constable and Bonington, we must review the period in which the mighty genius of Turner—too English ever to be fully appreciated abroad—grew up, and the simple craft of the “stained drawing” was developed into the art of painting in water-colour. We may put it thus : that when the curtain of war

dropped between England and France, the English School of landscape painting was not yet born; when the curtain was raised, that School was grown to its full strength, without a particle of foreign influence to shape its growth.

So long as painting remained tied to the apron-strings of a succession of foreign portrait-painters, there was no chance for the English artist to express the national love of scenery. It was only when he began to acquire real knowledge of the principles of his art that he could use it as no foreigner had ever done before him; and those who first ventured into this untried field of art had to fight against the opposition of critics who were afraid to approve of their work because they had no accepted foreign standard by which to judge it. Wilson, who gave up portrait-painting for landscape, starved for the sake of his art; Gainsborough made his living by portraits, and landscape painting was his relaxation; for English landscape does not fit into the artificial rules of the French artists who were the only "classical" landscape painters, men like Nicolas and Gaspar Poussin, Claude Gelée, and Claude Vernet; and these were the only painters of landscape whom the critics knew.

In the latter half of the 18th century, there grew up steadily a fashion for the country, for the "romantic" and the "picturesque." It was largely due to the more settled state of the nation under the House of Hanover, the increased wealth of landowners, and the gradual improvement of roads and means of communication, which enabled people with the cultivated mind of the towns to enjoy the simplicity of the country without its inconveniences. In this period were built many of the finest of English country mansions and palaces; and as the fashion grew, of finding relief in the country from the strain of town life, the demand arose for books about the country, "picturesque tours," county histories, descriptions of country seats and the like. To meet the demand for illustrations for such books, there arose a humble class of "topographical draughtsmen" who made careful

"portraits of places" in ink or pencil on paper, and laid light washes of transparent water-colour over them, to heighten the contrast between near fore-ground, middle distance, and extreme distance; and from these drawings a kind of etching in flat tones, called aquatint, was made.

These "stained drawings" as they were called, were the beginning of the great English art of water-colour painting, in which no foreign country has ever rivalled us: but their wide distribution gradually created a demand for pictures, that is, paintings in oil, the only form then recognized in England as legitimate art.

Even so, the earlier landscape painters were rather looked down upon as artists, and were the drudges of the profession of painting. Apart from Gainsborough, who, being a great portrait-painter, could amuse himself with landscape without incurring the contempt of the critics, and Wilson, who, though he earned some admiration, could not earn a living, no painter of the highest rank touched landscape till the very end of the century. George Morland (1763-1804), the son of a portraitist and painter of interior subject groups, though he made a sort of living by pouring out an immense number of picturesque country scenes, always containing figures and often with a sentimental interest, which sold readily at good prices, was not regarded with any respect as an artist, either by the critics nor by the dealers and engravers for whom he worked, and who made money out of him. His pictures were copied by the dozen copies at a time by inferior painters; and though his drawing of figures was admirable, and he was perhaps the first English painter who had real, first-hand knowledge of the forms of trees, and could render the play of sunlight over broken ground, it was rather the popularity of his pretty peasants and clean pink pigs that gained him a public than the excellence of his rich, free, fluid brushwork and delicate colour-sense. It was only very rarely that, in the intervals of "pot-boiling," he could take the time to do himself justice, as he has done in the beautiful *Interior of a Stable*, in the National Gallery, London (N.G. 1030); but in that picture we can see how sensitive an eye he had for the

soft English sunshine and shadow that no one—not even Gainsborough—had ever painted before in quite the same way, and how quick he was to catch the beauty in common things. It is true that he was a drunkard, for ever in debt, and only to be found in low company ; but such a picture as the **Robbing the Orchard*, in the Tennant Collection, shows that he was a fine draughtsman and a skilful composer, with a liveliness and charm and freedom from convention that place him in the front rank of English landscape painters, at a time when he could have no guide but his own genius.

He had a host of imitators, but no real successor, though Julius Cæsar Ibbetson (1759–1817), a Yorkshireman, worked with him and much resembled him in style, and through Ibbetson's influence the Morland type of landscape was carried on in Yorkshire by Joseph (1782–1855) and John Nicholas Rhodes (1809–1842) down to the middle of the 19th century : but in London, the fashion for the romantic and sentimental country subject soon died out ; and up and down England, in the country itself, a more genuine form of landscape painting was soon to grow up, far away from the Academy Schools and the critics, an art that owed little to any school but that of Nature herself.

The first of these self-taught English landscape painters was John Crome (1768–1821), who was born at Norwich of poor parents, and who spent the whole of his life in his native city. He was apprenticed to a coach-painter and sign-writer, but, when he was about seventeen, some crude drawings which he had induced a print-seller to put in his window for sale attracted the attention of a Mr. Harvey, an art lover and amateur painter who had in his house near Norwich a good collection of landscape paintings, including Gainsborough's *Cottage Door*, and works by Wilson, van der Neer, and Rembrandt. He took Crome up, allowed him to copy all his pictures, induced the portrait-painter Beechey to give him a little instruction from time to time, and found him employment as a drawing-master in Norwich—for drawing was now, with the advent of water-colour, an “accomplishment for young ladies” and

drawing-masters flourished everywhere. This was all Crome's training ; yet he is one of the greatest landscape painters in history, ranking only below Turner and Constable.

The reason was this : he had only one object in learning to paint, that of being able to perpetuate the beauty that he saw around him. For him, the beauty was there, ready made, and art was nothing to him but a means to an end ; so he learned what he could of the mechanical process of putting paint on canvas, from Wilson, Gainsborough and the rest of the artists whose pictures he copied, and then used this knowledge to paint, not imitations of their work, but just what he saw in Nature at the moments when she pleased him best.

There is no sentimentality in any of his pictures ; none of them " tell a story," and he never troubled to learn to paint a human figure really well. It was Nature herself he loved, her big space, and light. His picture of the **Poringland Oak* (N.G. 2674) is a wonderful " portrait " of an oak tree, almost down to the tiniest leaf, but his reason for painting it was not just because it was an oak tree, but because, standing as it did against the evening sky, it helped him to show how the glow of light came pouring out of the distance to his very feet. He never cared what the thing was that he painted, but only how it looked ; the light that fell upon it and the colour that came from it to his eyes were the things that he set down on his canvas, and light and colour are always beautiful. He never painted to make a living ; his work as a drawing-master kept him, and his pictures were his pleasures, so that he was never influenced by fashion, never became famous, and was scarcely known outside his own county in his lifetime. His art was not artistic (that is to say, artificial) enough to please the educated critics of the Royal Academy, but it found its way to the hearts of ordinary English people who knew and loved their own countryside, because they saw in it the expression of an enjoyment which they had often felt without ever thinking that it had anything to do with art.

Crome gathered around him in Norwich many pupils and imitators, of whom James Stark (1794-1859) and George Vincent (1796-1831) showed the greatest promise; but none of them was ever equal to his master; and there was one member of the "Norwich School" as it came to be called who, though much younger than Crome, never imitated him, but struck out a line of his own and became a great landscape painter in a very different way. This was John Sell Cotman (1782-1842): but since he was mainly a water-colourist, and owed much to the influence of his forerunners in that craft, we must hark back for a moment to its beginnings, in order fully to understand his place in the history of English art.

Joseph William Mallord Turner and Thomas Girtin were both born in 1775, the sons of London tradesmen; both showed early aptitude for drawing, and both were apprenticed to "topographers," the former to Thomas Malton (?-1803), an architectural draughtsman, and the latter to William Dayes (1763-1804), a landscape draughtsman of some merit; and the two met when both were employed in the workshops of John Raphael Smith, the engraver. J. R. Smith (1752-1812) was not only an engraver but a painter as well, excelling in small portraits in oil, and the friend of many artists, among them Rowlandson and Morland. The task of Turner and Girtin was that of colouring his engravings, an excellent way of learning how to control water-colour, and of becoming familiar with the work of the popular artists of the day. The two became great friends, making sketching expeditions together; Turner attended the Academy Schools from 1790 to 1793, and exhibited at the Academy as early as 1790. Girtin's first contribution to the Academy was in 1794. It is not certain whether he was ever at the Academy Schools; but in any case, landscape painting was not taught there in those days; it was elsewhere that both Turner and Girtin studied that art—in the fields around London, and in the study of Dr. Monro, who had been the friend and admirer of Gainsborough, and who used to invite young artists to his house to study and copy the

collection of Gainsborough's landscape drawings that he possessed.

Turner said in after years: "If poor Tom Girtin had lived, I should have starved," and it is true that in those early days, when the two were working side by side, it was Girtin who showed the greater originality and bolder progress. His aim was to carry water-colour beyond the stage of the mere washing of colour over a monochrome drawing, and it was he who first used strong masses of full colour, sharply separated from one another almost like the separate pieces of a stained-glass window, so that his landscapes, while they are carefully true representations of natural forms, depend for their beauty upon the balanced pattern which this method produced. While Turner was still making careful and detailed architectural drawings, Girtin, before his death in 1802, had already arrived at the stage at which his work was full of imagination and romantic feeling. The *Richmond Castle* at Leeds, for example, is not merely a drawing of a castle, but is a massive design, full of the solemnity of strength and antiquity, and all its colour is subdued to a sombre brown. The *Kirkstall Abbey*, in the Victoria and Albert Museum, is just as quiet, but conveys a feeling of gentleness and peace, by its long level lines, and the clear outline of the square tower set against the evening sky, all in tender tints of grey and blue and quiet green; and the *White House, Chelsea Reach* (in a private collection), is one square gleaming patch of rosy light in the midst of a wide expanse of misty blue. Girtin, in fact, was the first to paint landscape rather as he *felt* it than as he *saw* it—and that is imaginative landscape painting.

We have seen, in a previous chapter, that it was in the flat lands of Flanders and Holland that landscape painting had its true beginnings, because it is in such countries that great expanses of light and air, and soft graduations of colour are best seen and most naturally enjoyed: and therefore it is not surprising that the most of the pioneers of English landscape painting should have been natives of East Anglia, where similar conditions exist. Gainsborough



CONSTABLE
Bridge over the Stour
(*English*)

was born in Suffolk, and Crome in Norfolk; and Suffolk was also the native county of John Constable (1776-1837), the first English painter whose fame spread beyond England in his own day. Like Crome, he had no training save what he could pick up for himself in the face of the opposition of his father, a miller who wanted his son to follow in his business. Constable painted in his own fashion in the fields around his house, and it was not till he was twenty-three that he was allowed to go to London to attend the Academy Schools. However, apart from some instruction from Joseph Farington (1747-1821), a respectable topographical draughtsman, now more famous as a diarist, he learned nothing about landscape painting there, and his real work was done in the country every summer. Although he exhibited at the Academy, his work did not meet with much approval, and he was forty-three when at length he was made an Associate: but in 1823, when he was forty-seven, his picture *The Hay Wain*, now in the National Gallery, London, was bought by a Frenchman, and was shown in the Paris Salon of 1824, where it aroused a storm of admiration, and gained a gold medal. Its fresh colour glittering with light, its absolute freedom from artificiality, and the impression of wind in rain-laden trees and in the clouds racing across the blue sky, are wonderful, utterly different from anything that any painter had attempted before; and his **Cornfield*, also in the National Gallery, London (N.G. 430), which was shown in London in 1827, is just as marvellously simple and straightforward in its rendering of moving light and open air. All his great pictures give the impression of having been set down upon the canvas straight from nature, though as a matter of fact they were carefully composed from many oil-sketches of trees and skies and fields, made rapidly in the open air; the genius of Constable lay in leaving out of his picture everything that could interfere with the instantaneous impression of the aspect of nature that he wanted us to see; and his rich, heavy paint, and bold, strong colour, sparkling with tiny points of light, though they give the impression of a splendid carelessness, are really the result of infinite thought and

care ; and the method itself of laying on the paint heavily and often in big rough masses, was entirely his own, for no one before him had ever wanted to get the effect of freshness that was his aim. His work is not "artless," but he conceals his art with pains and skill, so that we may see the beauty that it represents so well, without ever thinking of the means he used to represent it.

Side by side with Constable in the Paris Salon of 1824 another Englishman enjoyed a triumph as a landscape painter. This was Richard Parkes Bonington (1801-1828) who, though he was born at Nottingham, removed to Calais at an early age with his family, and, showing an aptitude for painting, was trained in Paris, in the severely classic atmosphere of the *École des Beaux Arts* : his method of painting, especially in his interior scenes with figures, which are extraordinarily vigorous and lively, was purely French—a kind of hybrid of Chardin and Delacroix ; but the claim of some writers that Bonington was to all intents and purposes a French painter is absurd, for, though his handling of paint was as scholarly as a French training could make it, he was entirely English in his freedom from formality, and in the directness with which he set down what he saw in Nature. He was greatly impressed by the work of Constable, with which he was familiar from frequent visits to England ; and a tour in Northern Italy and Venice gave him a knowledge of the painting of atmosphere, clear, yet full of colour, which surpassed even that of Constable himself. Bonington was consumptive, and died at the early age of twenty-seven : and it may be that his singular power of suggesting immense height and airy space in his little pictures is to some extent due to his feverish search for health in the open air.

He worked both in oil and water-colour, and his colouring in landscape has far greater tenderness and delicacy than that of Constable, but an equal richness : indeed, as a painter of the high, quiet skies of a summer evening he is without a rival. The technical skill gained from his French training made it easy for him to get the results at which he aimed, and his English temperament

made him able readily to respond to nature's moods. His life was short and his works are consequently rare, but the finest group of them is to be found at Hertford House, London, in the Wallace Collection; of these, a *View on the Seine* and a tiny picture of *A Lady at her Toilet*, show the width of his range and the brilliance of his technical powers; for the one is full of great space and quiet sleepy light, and the other sparkles with vigorous contrast and lively action. If Bonington had lived longer, he must have surpassed Constable purely as a painter, so complete is his scientific mastery of method; but he lived long enough to help the Continent to realize that, in landscape at least, English painters had something new and something great to tell.

How new and how great that something was, it was left for Turner to show. We have already noted the beginnings of his career, which had seemed destined to be like that of many a score of unambitious topographical draughtsmen; and we have seen that he shared and understood the imaginative insight of his friend Girtin; we have seen on the other hand that it was in independence both of the classical traditions of painting, and of the slavish exactitudes of mere topographical drawing, that Crome and Constable and Bonington had built up the wholly English School of naturalistic landscape, whose charm was that of simple home-loving sentiment, with scarcely a touch of romance or of imagination.

It would not be true to say that Turner ever borrowed from Girtin, from Crome, from Constable, or from Cotman, or indeed that he owed anything either to his predecessors or his contemporaries: for he was above all an imaginative painter, and to him painting was simply a means for the expression of his imagination—that is, of himself and of the feelings produced in him by the beauty of landscape, of colour, light and air. Moreover, his imagination was intensely personal: he felt deeply, and was singularly unable to express himself in words; he had no grace or gentleness of manner, nor attractiveness of appearance, to make people ready to listen to him or to make a friend of him; and so he went through life to all appearances a grumpy, ill-natured,

ill-mannered little curmudgeon, with a great kind heart inside him crying out all the time to be understood ; and the only way in which he could make himself understood at all, could give the outside world a glimpse of his real self, was through his painting ; and so his painting was his servant, not his master. It was all one to him whether he used oil- or water-colour, indeed, it mattered little to him whether his colours lasted or not, for his main aim was to speak in colour, and to put before the eyes of other men the glories that he had seen with the inner eyes of the soul. It is a good thing that as a boy he had been taught the drudgery of drawing, so that it was never in his after-life a trouble to him ; for otherwise he could scarcely have kept in control his use of colour and space, so as to make them intelligible to the ordinary eye.

His earliest work is cool in colour and minutely careful in drawing : but his first visit to Switzerland in 1802 let his imagination loose, and in his great water-colours of that period his drawing became bolder and his sense of design more magnificent, while his colour, though still restrained, became deeper in tone and richer in variety. Also he had already begun to paint in oil, and in 1803 he exhibited at the Academy, *Spithead—Boat's Crew recovering an Anchor* (N.G. 481), in which his quick eye for the effect of light and air upon the colours of near and distant objects is plainly shown : about 1812-1813, he was finding new beauty in the effects of soft English light in mist and early dawn, as in *The Frosty Morning* (N.G. 492), and it is about this time that he studied the work of Claude le Lorrain, not to imitate him, but to use his balanced composition and luminous colour to his own ends. To this period belong *Crossing the Brook* (N.G. 497) and *Dido building Carthage* (N.G. 498), both exhibited in 1815. Though the former is an English scene, it is strongly suggestive of the influence of the classical style of painting and composition upon which Richard Wilson had based his art.

His first visit to Italy in 1819 brought about a great advance in his art. His colour becomes bolder, and his rendering of atmospheric effect more vigorous. He was

probably the first Englishman to visit Italy, not to study painters but to study nature: and if he learned anything from the Italian painters at all, it was a larger sense of design, which he used absolutely in his own way.

Then followed his wonderful Swiss and German landscapes, glowing with colour and filled with gleaming space: and, down to 1826, at Farnley Hall, in Yorkshire, he produced a great series of landscapes of the country round, in which he has captured, as none before him, the quiet colouring and hazy distances of Wharfedale. Many of these are upon grey paper, touched here and there with white: and all through his life, Turner defied all the conventions of the art of painting, for to him painting was nothing in itself, but only a means to an end.

In 1832 he first visited Venice; and the colour of Venetian skies and waters, and the romance and mystery of the city of the waters, inspired him to use his powers to the full. The pictures painted actually in Venice are delicate in colour and precise in drawing: but the little water-colour notes are scarcely more than the jottings down of a moment of delight in a golden cloud, or of the suggestion of romance in the reflection of a gondola in the water: and it was on these memories that his gorgeous imagination enabled him to build up, years afterwards, in England, such pageants of colour as *The Pictures of Titian carried in Triumph*, and **San Benedetto: looking towards Fusina* (N.G. 534), or such a gleaming mist-laden vision as the *Sol di Venezia going to Sea* (N.G. 535), 1844.

How completely Turner absorbed such experience and made it part of himself, so that it influenced his way of seeing even commonplace things, is shown by his **Rain, Steam, and Speed* (N.G. 538), which is a picture of a train crossing a viaduct. Trains in 1843 were ugly. Ruskin hated them and could see no beauty in them, yet the very painter who was his idol painted one and made it beautiful and even romantic. The black blur of the engine, the red glow of its furnace, the long perspective line of the high viaduct, all seem to thrust forward through the sweeping clouds of steam and smoke, mingled with the rainbow

drift of the storm caught by touches of the flying, fading light of afternoon. Far below, a river with tall trees beside it glimmers upward, green-grey and dim, and far above, little torn scraps of cloud glow in the clearer light. It is all indistinct and blurred as a dream, and yet it leaves a deep impression on the mind, like a dream of which one strives to remember the part that has slipped away.

Again, when the painter Wilkie, for whom Turner had a great unexpressed affection, died at sea off Gibraltar, he showed how painting was his language; for the **Burial of Wilkie* is a funeral poem. The ship, with its idle sails, stands dark against the clear whiteness of a dawning sky hemmed round with sullen clouds: the fire that glares at the ship's side stabs its reflection deep into the dark waters; and the cold green of the sea is broken by reflected lights as though it were full of restless movement despite its stillness. It leaves an impression of lonely dignity, absolutely expressive of the solemnity of that saddest of all ceremonies, a funeral at sea.

Though the *Fighting Téméraire* (N.G. 524), 1839, is so similar in subject, and indeed in sentiment—for it is the funeral of a noble ship, towed to her last berth—it strikes a wholly different note. Sea and sky are sapphire and ruby, dimmed by darkening cloud. The tall ship is the very spirit form of a ship, pale and silvery against the gathering twilight, and ships whose voyaging is not yet done stand about her like a guard of honour. Only the black tug, belching smoke and flickering firelight, is a material thing. It is as though Turner had said in words that this doomed ship was an immortal memory, of service given and of duty done; and under all the sadness there is pride.

Ulysses deriding Polyphemus (N.G. 508, 1829), painted in 1829, before Turner ever saw Venice, shows that even before then, Turner's language of romance was fully-grown, at least when pure romance was his theme; for there is no more exuberant splendour in the telling of a splendid lie in all the world than in this picture—though it was in a very different sense that a fellow-artist called it, when it was exhibited in the Academy, "*splendide mendax*." Ulysses was



TURNER
Brighton, The Old Chain Pier
(*English*)

the loveliest liar that ever lived ; and to have painted a literal representation of his "traveller's tale" of how he had blinded a one-eyed giant with a burning stake, and fled away triumphantly to sea, shouting insults at his writhing, furious victim, would have been to spoil the story hopelessly. Such a thing could only happen in realms of romance, where the very foam of the sea about the prow of a ship of ivory and vermilion was turned to fairy forms, where the sea and sky blazed with jewel-hues, and islands were of bronze, and giants like grey clouds about the mountain-tops. So Turner painted it, and so, and only so, the tale is real.

As though to prove, however, that neither romance, as in the *Ulysses*, nor sentiment, as in the *Téméraire*, nor scholarly tradition, as in the *Crossing the Brook* or the *Dido building Carthage*, was his inspiration, but only the beauty of light and air and colour, he painted, in 1839, and left to the National Gallery, London, the **Ancient Rome: Agrippina landing with the Ashes of Germanicus* (N.G. 523), with the condition that, together with his early picture (1807), *The Sun rising through Vapour* (N.G. 479), it should be hung between two pictures by Claude le Lorrain. Though the earlier picture represents an atmospheric effect, and studiously avoids any competitive interest, yet the individual details, the figures, the fish on the beach, and the ships, all insist on being seen, and have a distracting effect upon the eye. The great picture of his later years has a grandiose title, and a setting of architectural magnificence, and the suggestion of many figures moving in its misty light ; yet none of these things are thrust upon our notice ; light and colour, and dreamy distances of illuminated air are all we care to see ; and these are completely satisfying in themselves.

It would be downright silly to try to measure Turner by the standards of traditional art, for he cared nothing for tradition, though he studied it and used it as he pleased : but that is one reason for the fact that he has never been greatly studied or admired outside England. He painted the English mind—his own mind—romantic, sentimental,

illogical, and impulsive, and yet reserved and shy ; preferring to be understood only by sympathy and guesswork, rather than by line and rule and demonstration : varying in mood with every picture, and yet constant always to one love, his love of nature as he saw it. Such work could not be analysed, and so the intellectual French critics left it alone : and since he left the whole of his work that remained in his hands to the nation, it has not found a place in foreign galleries, and has few students and no imitators in foreign lands.

His latest years were clouded by a riotous extravagance of imagination not far removed from madness, and when he died in 1851 he had outlived his own greatness, and that of English landscape painting as a whole, by fully ten years ; but at its zenith his work was the highest expression of the purely English genius in painting, unimitated and inimitable.

Turner's imagination was concerned with the glorification of the material world in which he lived, it was based upon the physical beauties of light and air : but the imagination of his strange contemporary, William Blake (1757-1827), used the physical world as the symbol of a spiritual world of his own. Trained as an engraver on severely classical lines, given, from childhood, to the seeing of visions in which he believed profoundly, he lived a life, for the most part, of poverty, but never of misery, in the exaltation that lies on the border-line of madness, yet never, if we are to judge by his paintings alone, actually crossing it. He was rather a prophet than an artist, preaching a none too clearly defined apocalyptic doctrine of his own, and using poetry and painting as symbols of ideas, not as representations or descriptions of material things and conditions. His water-colour drawings, which depend wholly upon line, and are scarcely more than emphasized with colour, consist almost entirely of illustrations of his own mystical poems, and of such great poems as the Book of Job and Dante's works (e.g. **The Earthly Paradise*, British Museum), and are filled with human figures, often of strongly sensuous character which sometimes sinks to the level of mere sentimental prettiness.

and even vulgarity, and often rises to a mysterious majesty as hard to define as it is impossible to deny.

Blake, however, was an isolated phenomenon in the history of English art. His craft had the mark of genius upon it, in its passionate expression of his personal inspiration ; but it was a groping rather than a perfected craft, of which he had no sure command. Neither the thoughts which he sought to express, nor his means of expressing them, were completely under his own control ; and thus he could command no following among his contemporaries and successors, in an age which placed reason before inspiration, and workmanlike efficiency before nobility of purpose.

On the other hand, it was precisely because Turner was so completely master of his art that he added little or nothing to the craft of painting that could be used by other artists. The mere process of painting never suggested any new beauty to him, as it did to a far smaller man whose love of his materials was almost his whole inspiration. This was John Sell Cotman (1782-1842), the son of a Norwich draper ; from boyhood he had a marvellous instinct for the right use of the transparent tints of water-colour, which was just emerging, in the hands of Thomas Girtin, from the elementary stage of a method of colouring drawings into that of an independent art. He is generally regarded as a member of the "Norwich School," of which John Crome, with his friend Robert Ladbroke, was the founder in 1805 : but he had already by then arrived, under the guidance of Girtin, at an art of his own, in which the balance of broad, flat masses of transparent colour, sharply defined and separated from one another, was the basis of his design. Though he studied from nature, he translated everything he saw into this one kind of beauty, the beauty of decorative pattern, to which water-colour was peculiarly adapted. The colours of his earlier work, like the **Greta Bridge*, in the British Museum, are bold and strong, but, because the effect of water-colour is obtained by the reflection of light from the surface of the paper upon which it is laid, like the light which comes through a pane of coloured glass, they are not heavy : and since, as in a stained-glass window,

their beauty depends upon the pattern in which they are arranged in relation to one another, rather than upon the subject that they represent, each wash of colour must be pure and perfectly controlled: in such work there is no room for lucky accidents. In the work of his middle period (about 1824-1830) his colour became rather harsh and garish, but in his last years he reached a wonderful strength and dignity of design; and, though he painted also in oil, his whole art was dominated from first to last by the sense of pattern that he had first derived from the limitations of the water-colour medium. His life was one of difficulties and disappointments, and his art suffered at times from the feverish strife to make money and to be "popular," but even so, he never lost the love of good craftsmanship, the sure work of pencil and of brush, which make his drawings to-day a pattern to all students of design in painting, and of the possibilities of the craft of water-colour.

Of the host of water-colour painters besides Cotman who worked in the first half of the 19th century, only David Cox (1783-1859) marks a really independent development of the art; and, though Cox was a great water-colourist, his work really led the way to the degeneration of water-colour before the middle of the century into a cheap imitation of oil-painting. At first dry and careful, later it became marked by a singular boldness in the blotting in of masses of colour and shadow, and he was greatly instrumental in increasing the variety and range of water-colour pigments; later again, with a method of many minute touches of the brush, liquid and free in handling, he achieved wonderful effects of atmosphere and movement; and in his latest stages, his heavy and often sombre colouring, and massed design, on a large scale, brought his water-colours into a rivalry with oil that he himself was perhaps able to support, but which was fatal to his feebler followers and imitators. When he died, the art of water-colour painting was left without a great exponent till within the last few years, when H. B. Brabazon and J. S. Sargent and Walter Melville have shown the way back to the pure tradition and forward to new possibilities.

In the 40's of the 19th century industrial prosperity had brought into existence an immense body of well-to-do folk, who, by their training and surroundings, were entirely cut off from any artistic tradition whatsoever, and whose one idea of a picture was that it should be like something or somebody that they knew: and these good people had oil-paintings in the dining-room, water-colours in the drawing-room, and engravings in the bedroom, almost as a matter of furnishing. Such pictures were evidence of prosperous respectability, and as such, they had to be respectable—that is, thoroughly commonplace—and they had at least to look expensive. If they were really cheap, so much the better; one could get more of them for the money. So painters got into slovenly, hasty ways, for, to put it bluntly, good work and thoughtful work did not pay, because it took too long; original work, into which an artist put his own individuality, did not pay, because the more outspoken a man is, the fewer people he is likely to please, and so “outspoken” painting did not sell easily. Therefore, the more sincere an artist was, the more disgusted he got with the public, and the more artistic a man was, the more the public distrusted him and his work, and thought him conceited and his work eccentric. It was a bad state of affairs, and resulted in exaggeration on both sides. The artists abused the public, saying they had no taste and no “soul for art,” and the public laughed at the artists, saying they lived in a world of their own that had nothing to do with realities.

Yet the queer thing was that when an artist did concern himself with realities, the public understood him less than ever. Ford Madox Brown (1821–1893), in his picture *Work*, turned the subject of a gang of men taking up the road into a marvellous decorative design, in which there is not a figure or an object that was not taken from daily life. The workmen with their tools and their dinner-cans, the fine lady, the tattered flower-woman and the rest, are all photographically real; but the bright colours, beautifully worked together into a pattern to please the eye, the minute and careful drawing, and the beautifully balanced

composition, make the whole into a picture of the most satisfying kind: but the public did not care for it. The subject, they said, was commonplace; and because to them beauty in a commonplace subject was unfamiliar, they thought it must be unreal.

And when Brown painted **Christ washing Peter's Feet* (N.G. 1394), they went straight off to the other extreme. This was a sacred subject, and to treat it so realistically was not reverent. The puzzled, half-shamefaced expressions of the disciples at the table shocked them, and the unusually low view-point, by which the figure of Christ is brought boldly into the foreground, and the table and the figures round it form a kind of frieze across the upper part of the picture, startled them, so that they overlooked the lovely balance of green and white and red and gold, and the way in which all the composition leads the eye to the bowed head and clasped hands of St. Peter, who sits overwhelmed and awestruck at the humility of God.

Ford Madox Brown, though his influence had much to do with the formation of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in 1848, was never a member of it, for his realism was too stern even for the very earnest young men who were its members. Holman Hunt (1827-1910) was the founder of the Brotherhood, whose rule was never to paint or draw anything but from the actual thing itself, and to reject all the conventions and methods of painting that had grown up out of the accumulated experience of all painters since the Renaissance, as being departures from the truth.

John Everett Millais (1829-1896) was a member, and Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882) was another. Edward Burne-Jones (1833-1898) was a later recruit, and studied for a time under Rossetti: and there were other members of less importance.

Although allied in a common object, these artists differed greatly both in kind and in degree. Holman Hunt alone remained faithful all his life to the cause; he was a deeply religious man, and the majority of his pictures are of religious subjects. So earnest was he in his loyalty to the rule of the Brotherhood, that to paint the *Scapegoat* and

Christ among the Doctors he visited Palestine at great risk and cost, to paint the shores of the Dead Sea on the spot, and to put (unknown to them) portraits of Jewish Rabbis from the life into his picture of the Doctors in the Temple.

An unwearying craftsman, he paints each shaving on the floor in *The Shadow of the Cross* with as much care as the jewels in the chest, that Mother Mary had treasured through the years from the coming of the Three Kings to Bethlehem. Sincere in sentiment, he had a marvellous power of rendering emotional expression—tender, sorrowing reproach and expectancy on the face of the Christ, in the *Light of the World*, triumph on that of Our Lady in the *Triumph of the Innocents*, idleness and irresponsibility on that of the girl in the picture of the **Hireling Shepherd*, and, without human features to be his medium, awful desolation in the *Scapegoat* foundered in the salt desert of the Dead Sea shore.

Rossetti was more of a poet than a painter, a superb draughtsman in chalk, but so uncertain in his control of the brush, that in his finished works his fine drawing is often obscured; his colour range is narrow, but within its limits rich and harmonious; his sense of design is often spoilt by overcrowding and spotty arrangement of colours and forms, as in the case of the tiresome background of white roses in the **Lady Lilith*, in the Metropolitan Museum, New York: and a certain air of melancholy which is to be found in all his work is the reflection of his intensely self-centred temperament. His **Ecce Ancilla Domini* (the Annunciation) (N.G. 1210), in the Tate Gallery, though it well displays his power of drawing, and is a wonderful example of the control of delicate tones of light and shade and colour in white, is depressing in sentiment and stiff in composition. The repetition of vertical lines is quite deliberate, and does emphasize successfully the stillness of the figure of the angel poised in mid-air; but the canvas is divided rather awkwardly into two halves from top to bottom, though the two colour notes of the blue curtain and the crimson cloth upon the praying desk are beautifully placed, and save the design

from dullness. Burne-Jones suffers, like Rossetti, from the monotony which comes of a narrow outlook upon life. His art, though exquisite as pure draughtsmanship, thoughtful and graceful in design, and delicately varied in colour, is always self-conscious, and studiously avoids contact with any real experience. It is utterly separated from life; and for all their devotion to the truth, the pre-Raphaelites as a whole suffer from the fact that they seldom went outside the studio to find it.

Millais, in his early years a devoted member of the Brotherhood, and, as the *Blind Girl*, at Birmingham, and **Christ in the Carpenter's Shop* (N.G. 3584), at the Tate Gallery, show, a very wonderful follower of Holman Hunt, with a delicacy of colour and bigness of design beyond that of the founder of the Brotherhood, soon came to regard this phase of his work as a training rather than as an end in itself, and became a painter of popular story-pictures such as **The Boyhood of Raleigh* (N.G. 1691), *Saved*, and *The Order of Release* (N.G. 1657), all in the Tate Gallery. These show the value of his apprenticeship in honest draughtsmanship, but they have also the over-emphasized sentiment, and the studio-like pose which were the defects of the school. In his later years, he shook off both these defects, but retained to the last a mastery of drawing which enabled him to venture into impressionistic landscape painting with no small success: and by the study of the work of Velazquez he acquired a mastery of the brush which no pre-Raphaelite training could ever have taught him. These qualities also redeem his work as a portrait-painter from the commonplace.

It is in the great pre-Raphaelite collection at Birmingham that this remarkable phase of English art can best be studied; and the drawings and paintings of this Brotherhood to be seen there reveal both its strength and its weakness: for while on the one hand it introduced into English art for the first time the pure and thoughtful draughtsmanship and conscious design upon which the art of mediæval Italy had been founded, on the other hand it developed in its members an unreality and preciosity of outlook which only served to deepen the impression, all

too easily made upon the ordinary English mind, that art is the expensive plaything of a few peculiar and unpractical people, rather than a natural expression of human emotions and ideas.

The impressionism of James McNeill Whistler (1834-1903) was a kind of counterblast in England to the minutely detailed drawing and pure colour of the pre-Raphaelites; though, as an American trained in Paris, and strongly influenced both by the French impressionists and by Japanese art, then becoming known in Europe, he can hardly be included among English artists. When we look at the exquisitely quiet colour and sober design of his **Portrait of the Artist's Mother*, now in the Louvre, we can hardly understand the storm of controversy which his work aroused; but the simplification of a subject so as to turn it into a design, and of colour almost to a single note, was new then to a generation that wanted "everything put in," and painters and critics who thought that a picture should have sentiment found Whistler's pictures meaningless. Whistler had perfect command of design and tone, but his work is sometimes careless to the point of insincerity and emptiness.

With George Frederick Watts (1817-1904), we must bring our study of English painting to a close. Like Blake, he was more a preacher than a painter, and like Blake he never really mastered the difficulties of draughtsmanship: but he had a great gift of decorative design, a glorious instinct for colour, almost like that of the great Venetians, and an unfailing sincerity of purpose. Also he had the spirit of romance; and though sometimes his allegory is overladen and obscure, in a straightforward simple theme like that of **Sir Galahad*, which he presented to Eton College as a sermon in paint upon purity of life, there is a rare and tender purity, and an atmosphere of real devotion. The design, though simple, is full of thought. The great white horse, the silver gleam of the armour, the soft light of the blue sky, and the cool green of the trees, are all bound together, as it were, by the red trappings of the horse, and the shadowed scarlet of the scabbard of

the Knight's sword ; and, though sentiment is strong in Watts' work, it is always backed by a certain majesty of composition and glowing unity of colour, that make us ready to forgive his very English faults of uncertain draughtsmanship and sometimes overlaid imagery.

The art of painting still has worlds to conquer that never came within the ken of its pioneers. Every day brings fresh experiment, and we may hope that some of it may lead to fresh discovery : but an outline history, such as this, cannot venture into a field whose boundaries are still undefined, nor concern itself with movements whose outcome is not sure, nor their value weighed. So, it must cease at a moment upon which we can claim to be able to look back with detachment, and with unruffled judgment. Those who come after us must undertake the difficult task of appraising the historic significance of the artistic movements of to-day.

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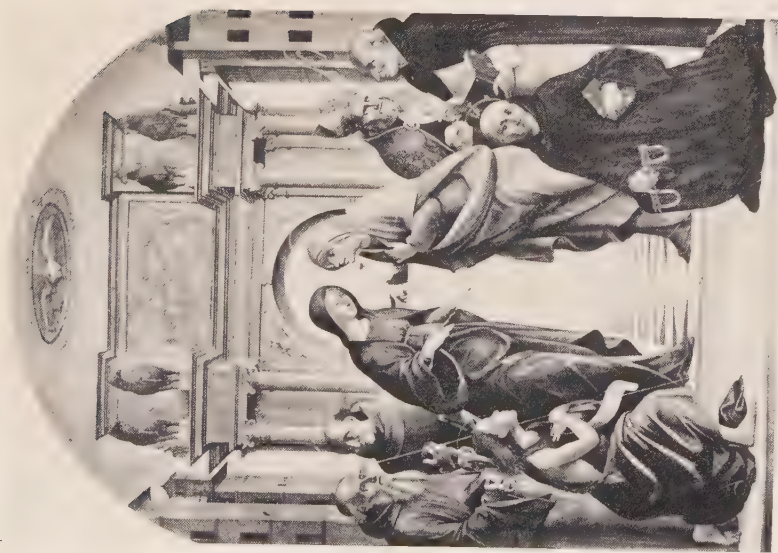
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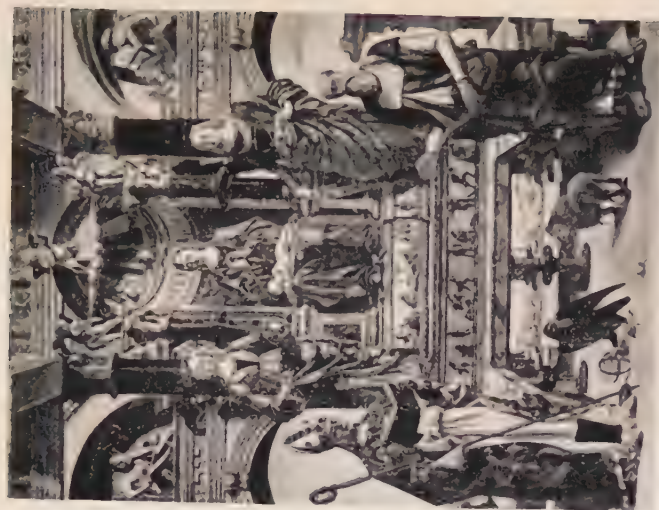


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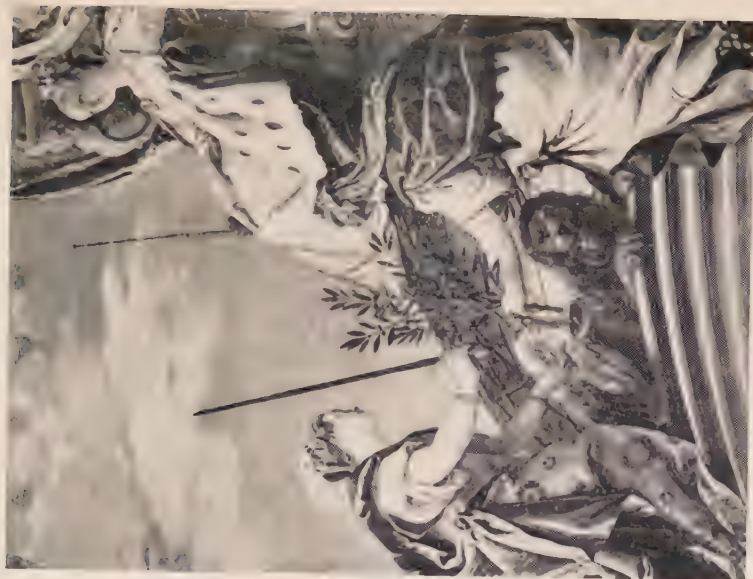
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A Canon with his Patron Saints



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Autumn Landscape with Herd



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The Adoration of the Kings



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Triptych



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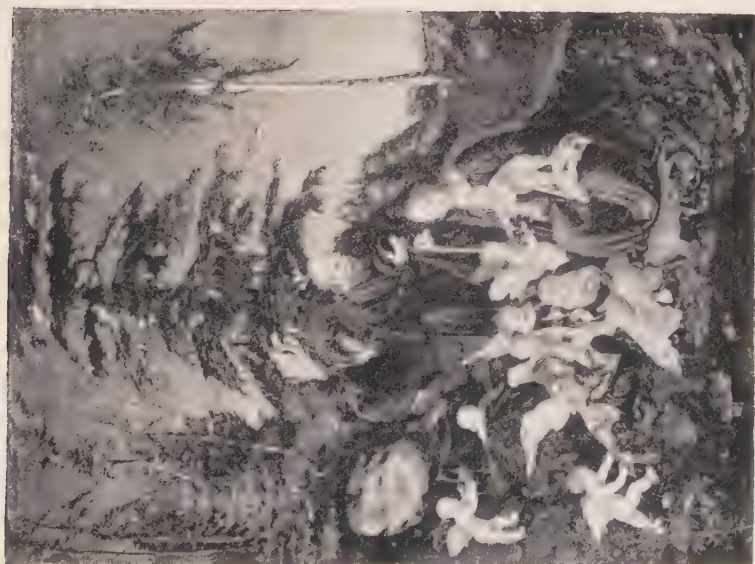
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The Presentation in the Temple



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St. Elizabeth of Hungary and SS. Catherine and Rosalie



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The Rest on the Flight



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A Child with a Parrot



REMERANDI
Portrait of a Woman



MAES
Old Woman Spinning



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Landscape, Cattle and Figures : Evening



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